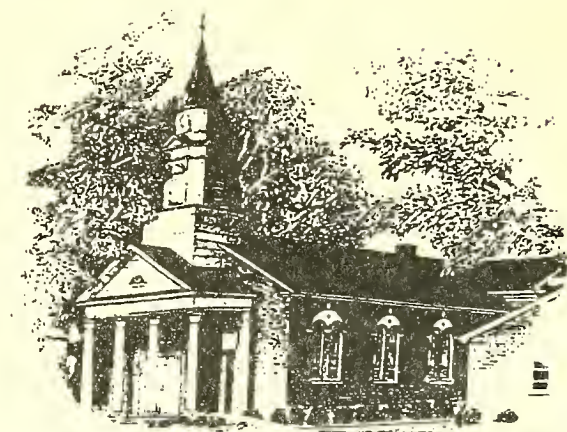
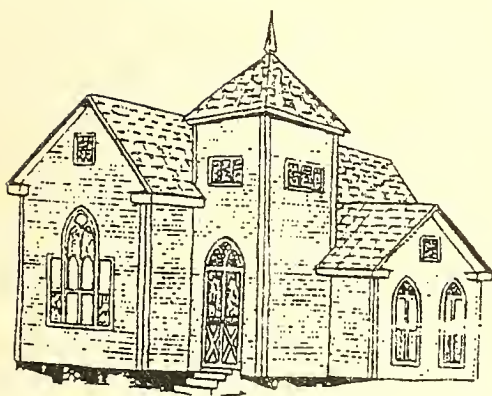


*Through
the Years
1901 - 1997*



*The Story of
Mineral Springs
United Methodist Church
Mineral Springs, N. C.*

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Written and compiled by Bill Howie and Clara McDonald

Presented to the Church on Heritage Sunday November 16, 1997

Acknowledgments

The writing of history, in large part, is the bringing together an accumulation of written records researched from many sources, verbal accounts lodged in the memories of those who were and are a part of the body and assembling these in a manner which tells the story.

The writing of this, a history of our church, is no different. Many different sources were tapped to make one story as complete as is practical and appreciation is expressed here to the following

- The individuals who thoughtfully preserved the written records for us locally--some of whom are the church secretaries, the committee and board secretaries, and the leaders of many special groups.

- Olive Howie who has labored so faithfully in preserving our story in pictures.

- To the stories and news items appearing in the Monroe Enquirer and The Monroe Journal.

- To the Waxhaw United Methodist Church records.

- To the South Carolina Methodist Archives at Wofford College.

- To many of our members contributions for our memories section.

- To our present Pastor Jim Yow and many past ministers.

Then there is the much needed appreciation to those who have spent many hours in typing, proofreading, editing, processing the pictures, and assembling this book.

They are Diane and Mike White, Frances and David Helms, Jim and Susan Yow, without the dedicated efforts on their parts, and the endless hours spent, this book could not have been published.

Cover by Marilyn Wooten.

Forward

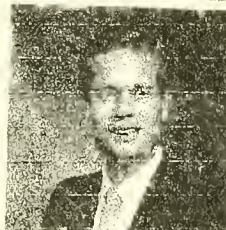
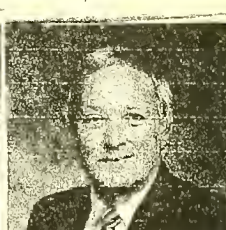
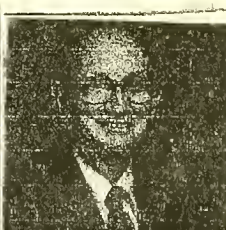
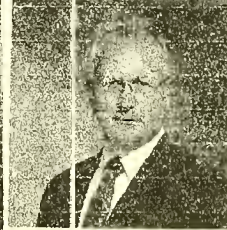
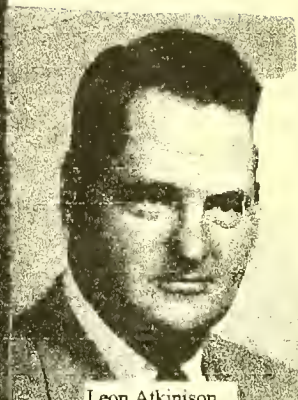
This book is dedicated to the members of Mineral Springs United Methodist Church, past, present, and future.

It is dedicated to those who have gone on before and who have given us so rich a heritage ----- those who have completed their pilgrimage in life and who have moved from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant.

It is dedicated to a host of those yet living, who have labored to bring us to where we are today.

It is dedicated to those who yet will follow in the earnest and prayerful hope that they will carry the banner of Jesus Christ to yet still greater accomplishments.

And last, it is dedicated to our parents, Baxter and Leona Howie who were a part of that great "Crowd of Witnesses" who have preceded us and who have left to us a legacy of an enduring faith.



PART I

OUR STORY



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Born in the spirit of the old Camp Meetings at McWhorters, nurtured in the love and care of Pleasant Grove, our mother church, established and sustained by the affections and dedicated efforts of generations past--- Mineral Springs United Methodist Church stands today as a beacon on a hill, pointing the way to Jesus Christ to all who come within the sphere of its continuing and expanding influence.

The story of our church does not have its beginning here in the village, but rather on a deserted hilltop a few miles away.

It was there, at McWhorters Meeting House and Camp Meeting that our roots were first planted, in 1787, as those hardy mostly Scotch Irish immigrants established the Methodist faith for the first time in what is now Union County.

Credit for bringing Methodism, with its unrelenting zeal for the lost in the early years to present day Union County rests upon the supreme dedication of a band of men known as circuit riders.

Called by God and commissioned by Asbury, they went out in the face of the post Revolution spiritual decline to fashion a new nation in the image of God and to “spread scriptural holiness throughout the land”.

They were appointed to circuits where, perhaps there wasn't a single society (church) - just people without any organized religion. They preached and lived wherever and whenever opportunity offered--in taverns, private one room log homes, in town halls, poorhouses on the trail side, in barnyards and wood clearings. As a testament of the rigors of life faced by these circuit riders, their average life span was 35 years.

Their instructions were “Go into every home in course and teach everyone therein, young and old, to be Christians inwardly and outwardly-fix it in their memory-write it on their hearts”.

“In order to do this, there must be line upon line-precept on precept, what patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this”. Such was the setting for the first circuit to be formed in this area.

It eventually was a circuit of 24 “preaching places” stretching from Providence on the north side to just short of Camden on the south. Services were held whenever the circuit rider and horse could arrive on the scene.

In the late 1700’s, a great revival broke out all across America, known as “The Second Great Awakening” and from this movement sprang The Camp Meeting.

In these years, this area was still looked on as the frontier and was settled mostly by hard living sturdy pioneers seeking a better life in remote settings. It was into the lives of these people that the Camp Meeting fit perfectly; providing two needed aspects of life, spiritual renewal and social fulfillment. In those early years over 800 Camp Meetings flourished in America.

It has been said that this one movement played a major role in Americans formation - one which bases our national image upon Christianity and its influence upon our lives.

Between 1787, when McWhorters Meeting House was established, and 1800, a Camp Meeting was formed there. This location served until 1829 when, due to a failing water supply and a growing participation, a new location was formed, which was Pleasant Grove, where two large springs were found.

The Camp Meeting was begun here in 1829 and soon thereafter a local church was also formed; a church from which several of our present day churches sprang. Here the spirit moved mightily and both the camp meeting and the church grew, serving a large area of the county, serving many of our present members ancestors for three or four generations.

Except for outside influence, in all probability, it is at Pleasant Grove that we at Mineral Springs would still be worshipping.

As railroads have played a very significant part in the development of much of our country, so did they play a part in the birth of the community to become known as Mineral Springs. In 1888, the Georgia and Northern

Railroad came through the area, crossing the Potters Road. (Highway #75 was not constructed until the 1920's). As railroads were the main arteries of transportation in those days, soon a thriving village, then known as Potters Crossing, and later as Potters grew around this junction.

In addition to travel by railroad, most local movement of people and goods was done by horseback, wagon, buggy, ox cart, or on foot. Due to the distance from the village to Pleasant Grove, a devout group of citizens, many of whom were Pleasant Grove members, decided to organize a Sunday School here in 1898. W. W. Laney gave a lot and the people built a two room meeting house. The meeting time was to be Sunday afternoon so as not to interfere with Pleasant Groves worship times. This Sunday School met for a time in a building located between our present church and Moser Construction Company. It's Superintendent was C. M. Penegar. This is noted in the Quarterly Conference Report of the Waxhaw Charge of 1898.



Early Sunday School in background

Present records reveal that Sunday School was reorganized on July 27, 1901 with W.A. Howie as Superintendent and M.M. Winchester as Secretary. This group then began meeting in a tenant house owned by S.B. Stephenson located on a dirt street running parallel to the railroad and about 1000 feet west of present day Potter Road crossing.

The name was known as Potters Sunday School. This site is now considered as the birthplace of our church. On the opening Sunday there were 34 persons present with four classes - three of which were led by Mrs. Ella Porter, Mr. W.J. Armfield and Mrs. Armfield. Since most attendees were still members of Pleasant Grove, this Sunday School met in the afternoon.

On this opening day the scripture used was Genesis 12 1-9 "The Call of Abraham". The song sung was No. 182 "Bringing In The Sheaves" from the Young Peoples Hymnal. The record shows that the weather was clear and warm. How appropriate the scripture that day for this new venture was "Leave your land - Go into a new place and I will give it to you".

This School was not organized as Methodist although most of the attendees were Methodist who were members at Pleasant Grove. It was organized as a Union Sunday School, a part of The American Sunday School Union.

This group in the 1800's was an evangelistic movement with much power--just as was the Methodist movement. Their missionaries were moving all across America with a singular aim of establishing new Sunday Schools.

Since ours was known as a Union Sunday School, and since the materials used were Union Sunday School materials, and since the minutes of the Waxhaw Circuit Quarterly Conference mention several times that we were indeed a Union School, there is no doubt but that we were indeed a Union School. Attendance records on hand reveal that interest was growing during the next several years in seeing that this group survived and grew. A sample of the original records for the year 1901 are shown below.

RECORD FOR SUNDAY, July 28th 1901

Religious Services conducted by Super by A Horie

Opening song 182 In Young Peoples Hymnal

Officers and Teachers present 40; absent

Scholars present 30; absent

Scripture Lesson Gen 12 ch 1-9 Verse 1-10

Subject of Lesson God calls Abram

School addressed minutes by

Collection Weather Clear & warm

School closed by Singing

REMARKS

Potters		Sunday school.											
NAME.	Teacher												
	Mr. Ella Porter	July 7	July 14	July 21	July 28	Aug 4	Aug 11	Aug 18	Aug 25				
Blanch Aldridge		+				+							
Marion Loney						+							
Thomas Loney						+							
Virgie Loney						+							
Ed. Amfield						+							
Goody Amfield						+							
Leah Amfield						+							
Oscar Porter						+							
Bascom Helms						+							
John Helms						+							
Robert Winchester						+							
Edgar Winchester						+							
Ada Lee Knudly						+							
Maud Horvath						+							

Potters		Sunday school.											
NAME.	Teacher												
	Mr. J. Amfield.	July 7	July 14	July 21	July 28	Aug 4	Aug 11	Aug 18	Aug 25				
Murray Aldridge													
Ray Amfield													
Beatrice Loney													
Gertrude Loney													
James Loney													
Bertie Magnafus													
Mellie Loney													
Robert Magnafus													
Benson Magnafus													
Bessie Conly													
Lora Conly													

Potters 1901		Sunday school.											
NAME.	Teacher												
	Mr. J. Amfield.	July 7	July 14	July 21	July 28	Aug 4	Aug 11	Aug 18	Aug 25				
Mr. Ella Horvath													
Mrs. Emma Knudly													
Mr. Amfield Knudly													
John Doeber													
Mr. Mrs. Winchester													
Mrs. C. Winchester													
Mr. E. Amfield													
Blanch Loney													
Bertie Thompson													
Mr. C. Thompson													
Mrs. Allen Loney													

A picture showing the attendance, in front of the Stevenson house, reveals over 100 there that day - this is in the years 1901-1906.



This humble location served the Sunday School from 1901 - 1908. Trying to hold a meaningful Sunday School in this facility must have been next to impossible for that faithful band.

Leadership by both the lay people and the minister determines the character of a church.

Judging by what we know and what must be assumed the ministry of Rev. L.T. Mann, in all likelihood, provided the needed leadership to energize the move to build a chapel here. Rev. Mann's first report to the Quarterly Conference of the Waxhaw Charge, in 1906, reflected his views of the state of the charge was. "Viewed from any definite stand point, it is difficult to say what the state of the charge is.

It is true that our church life moves in an even tenor of its way, at one time as about another - but with church life, as with physical life, it is possible for elements of injury and disintegration to live latent and unseen and yet more to a result of hurt and disaster." "...I am concerned that our church life from a spiritual standpoint is not the best...I am inclined, however, to say it is not the worst..." He continues "...We need to be profoundly stirred and mightily moved to an impulse of revival power in

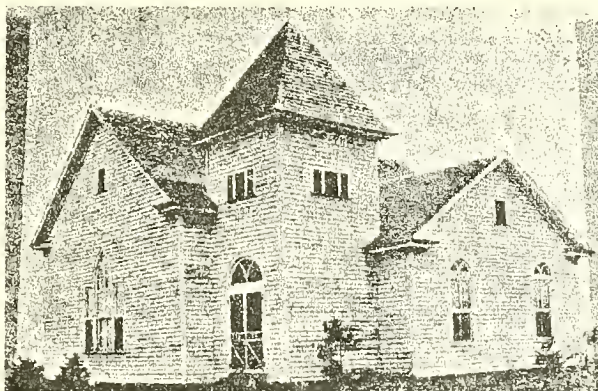
every congregation...We shall presently move to this urgent task - let us seek preparation for this work in head and heart and invoke for the cause abundant success..."

A year later in his 1907 report he moves in a positive manner in stating. "...We need a better place for preaching at Mineral Springs. The house there is neither suitable nor adequate. We need a building adapted to public worship and Sunday School." "As I see it, this is of vital importance to our interest in that village and to Pleasant Grove itself."

This approach and the feeling expressed could have been the spark needed to move on with a building project, even in the face of the fact that this group of folk were only organized as a Sunday School, with most of them attending Pleasant Grove Church at that time.

As cash, during those years, was as scarce as the proverbial "Hens Teeth" the Sunday School offerings rarely went over \$.50 and sometimes only \$.02. One cannot help wondering just how the building of the Mineral Springs Chapel could have been accomplished. However, it was indeed built in 1908 with an average attendance that year of 60. Speculation has it that a revival conducted by J.W. Hawkins in early 1908 coupled with Rev. Mann's leadership gave birth to the possibility of success in this endeavor.

It is apparent that the year 1908 marked one of our "Defining Hours" for us in our day, for it was here that these hardy folk gave us a firm footing on which to build. The building stood on one acre of land, given by W.W. Laney.



Entries into the Quarterly Conferences for several years give evidence of the uncertainty regarding our Sunday School and its connection with the church.

March 1909 -- "There is a Sunday School at Mineral Springs - a new organization counted as a Union School.."

October 1909 -- "Mineral Springs Sunday School cannot be strictly reported as a Methodist School. This Sunday School is well attended and they seem to be sowing seeds for a harvest to the church" - C.M. Campbell

January 1910 -- "Mineral Springs has never been recognized as a Methodist School although it is composed of the children of the church"

January 1911-- Of the four churches on the charge it was reported that three Sunday Schools were Methodist and the report added "two others" (Mineral Springs and Flint Ridge)

September 1911-- Mineral Springs listed as Methodist Sunday School with C.A. Baker as Superintendent
Note: (For the first time the 3rd Quarterly Conference, 1911, listed us as a Methodist Church)

Entries in the Quarterly Conference reports during these formative years show additional glimpses of church life then.

April 1913--"The prayer meeting at Mineral Springs meets with hearty support and is conducted by the membership"

September 1914--"The recent meeting at Mineral Springs, while not productive of any great ingathering, has been a very material benefit in strengthening the spiritual life of the congregation."

October 1915--"Mineral Springs shows quite a decided increase along all lines, J.D. McCorkle is serving as Superintendent."

January 1916--Officers of the Ladies Aid Society are: Mrs. H.A. Helms, President; Miss Bertha Thompson, Secretary



Top Row: Frank Houston, Bunyon Coan, Baxter Howie, Bruno McCorkle, Tom Doster, Brack Doster
 2nd Row: Hall Wolfe, Vaid Helms, George Coan, Otis Coan, Oscar Porter, Dewey Helms, Clarence Keziah
 Front Row: Mark Winchester, Flo Coan, Claude Helms, Bascom Helms



Kathleen Long, Grace Coan, Helen Polk, Nell Coan, Buddy Coan, Neil Robinson, Horace Long, ___ Wolfe, Willie G. Moser, ___, Ruby Godfrey, Isabel Gordon, Veda Baker, Mrs. John Gordon (Teacher)

Our story becomes a bit muddled at his point. It seems that, even with the leadership, both lay and clergy, at this time was Methodist, a Presbyterian minister served the Chapel with preaching every fourth Sunday. Sunday School and Wednesday prayer meetings in the homes prevailed during these years. The Presbyterian minister Rev. R. J. McIlwaine tried to persuade the people to establish a Presbyterian Church here, however the people prevailed in their intent to become a Methodist Church. Therefore, on Sunday July 15, 1911, we became a Methodist Church with Rev. C.M. Campbell as our first minister. At this same time the Union Sunday School would become Methodist. Enrollment was around 100 in these first Methodist years. Those who signed on as Charter Members are listed below:

Racheal Alexander*	M. Ella Gordon*	Louise Porter*
Effie Alexander*	Hugh Helms*	Oscar C. Porter*
Thomas L. Aldridge*	Fannie Helms*	Ora Lee Porter(Laney)*
Rachael Alice Aldridge*	Leona M. Helms	J. Lee Polk*
M. Blanche Aldridge*	Claude H. Helms	Annie M. Polk*
C. A. Baker*	Robert Howie*	Henry Polk
Luther Baker*	Mary E. Howie*	G. Nall Robinson*
Conrad Baker	Will A. Howie*	Ella Robinson
Mrs. Maggie Baker*	Ida M. Howie*	Wincie J. Robinson
Martha Baker(Riggins)*	Vaid Leander Helms	Tessie McCorkle(Broom)*
Pearl Broom	Maude Howie(Coan)	Maggie L. Robinson
Odessa Baker(Price)*	Bessie D. Howie	Mattie Robinson
Henry C. Baker	Robert Edward Helms	Thomas Carl Robinson
J. F. Coan*	Bascom Allison Helms	A. E. Robinson
W. C. Coan*	Baxter F. Howie*	Thomas Carl Robinson*
Sarah M. Coan*	Vera Helms	Raymond Robinson
Gatha Coan(Taylor)	Eustace Helms	W. P. Robinson
Lois Coan(Long)	Wallace M. Laney*	W. O. Thompson*
John Bunyan Coan	Alice Laney*	Bertha Thompson*
George Phifer Coan	Baxter Laney*	Ethel Thompson*
Thomas L. Coan	Virginia Laney*	Catherine Winchester*
Annie L. Coan	William W. Laney	Ruby N. Winchester
Flow Coan	Henry Laney	Laura V. Winchester
May Coan	Frank Thomas Laney	Edna V. Winchester
Otis Coan	Cordie Long	Mark Dewey Winchester
Guy Coan	Lou Ella Long	Lula J. Winchester*

Lula Beatrice Carter	Charles B. McCorkle	Nardis R. Winchester*
F. C. Doster	George McCorkle	Nancy B. Winchester*
Sadie E. Doster	S. E. McCorkle	Frank Winchester
Ida Lelland Doster	J. D. McCorkle	W. T. Wolfe
John Gordon*	Mrs. Nannie McManus	Mrs. S. C. Wolfe

Some of the above charter members transferred by letter from Pleasant Grove Methodist Church and are designated (*)

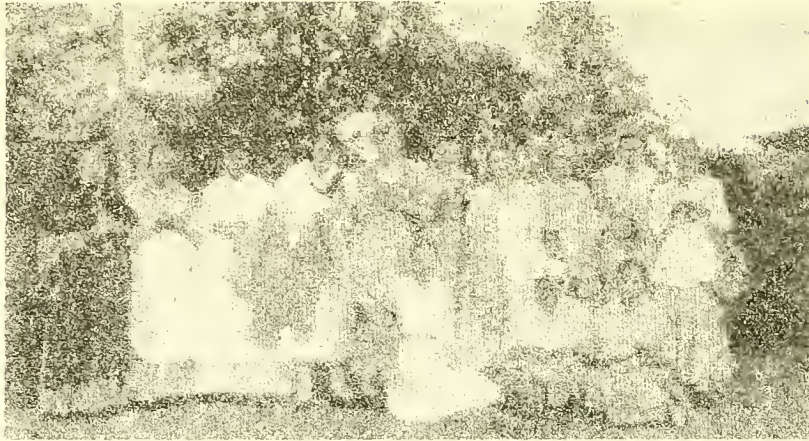
As can be seen, many of those first members were former members of Pleasant Grove Church and it is fitting that a note of appreciation for the heritage given Mineral Springs by Pleasant Grove be expressed here.

Records show that the first youth group formed was known as Epworth League, being organized in 1911, with 20 members under the leadership of Mrs. Ethel Howie.

This group enjoyed picnics at the mineral spring as shown below. The following people are included in the picture. Bascom Helms, Vaid Helms, Leona Helms, Nell Helms, Amon Helms, Vivian Winchester, Edna Winchester, Claude Helms, Bernice Winchester, Bessie Howie, Tom Coan



The next group to convene was The Ladies Aid Society in 1913.



Ladies Aid Society-Displaying home sewn articles for World War I soldiers

In order to get a more personal look at life during these early years we have asked some of our present day older (and younger) members to contribute to this paper by giving some of their memories of time past. We are placing these notes in a special section called "Memories" at the latter part of the book. These notes contain some interesting material about a day and time gone from the present scene, and should make interesting reading.

In the years preceding and during the Depression life for our people, was centered around the family farm and its demands on the time and energy of all the members of the household. Every member of the family was expected to work in the fields, farmyard, and household. These were trying times - times that tested the very existence of some while bringing extreme hardship to nearly all. As a testimony to the economic struggles faced by everyone, a report in the Monroe paper in 1929 stated that, during one month, over 2,000 parcels of land were auctioned off due to non payment of taxes - this just in Union County.

One local families record shows that they had borrowed \$ 900 and the payment was to be \$ 5.00 a month and that there were several months where no payment was made. Our church survived these times bringing messages of hope and faith in times of need. It even experienced a little growth in

these hard times with the construction of the bell tower in 1924 and then in 1934 two more rooms were added to the back of the sanctuary. The building committee members were S.M. Kale, F.T. Laney, R.E. Robinson, H.A. Helms, and John Richardson.

A very meaningful and lasting gift was given by the Frank Krauss family in 1926 - a gift we today can benefit from and enjoy every time we come on the church grounds. The letter telling of the gift is copied below.

KRAUSSWOOD

Mineral Springs, N.C.
July 15, 1926

To Rev. M. A. Osborn, Pastor
The Trustees and Congregation
of Mineral Springs Church:

It is with genuine pleasure that I present to you, 15 Water-Oaks, One Beechnut, One Dog-wood, Three Evergreen Hedge Treelets, and Ten Cedars, all living firmly established, and cultivated to date.

I trust these trees will add to the comfort and pleasure of the community and worshipers and add beauty to the church grounds.

For hundreds of years, may these kings and queens of shade gladden the hearts of the folks who worship here; and may the gentle zephyrs of our beautiful southland whisper sweet songs among their green leaves to the silent sleepers resting near by.

With best wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,
Frank A. Krauss, Sr.

Mineral Springs Church
1908-1943

As our people were beginning to recover from the Depression, our Nation was plunged into World War II. The effects on the people were many and varied. First and foremost was the calling up for the Armed Services, the majority of the young men, during the four years the war lasted. Out of the ranks of our local church families went around 35 of our young men. This calling effected those left at home as they had to assume the tasks on the farm which the men would have been doing. Very severe rationing of almost all goods and services brought hardships on the population.

Many kinds of volunteer activities were carried out by our people, to give support for a complete war effort. All kinds of materials were saved and turned in for this purpose. Cars weren't manufactured at all for four years. Gas and tires were strictly rationed. The speed limit was reduced to 35 mph.

TRAGEDY - CHALLENGE - VICTORY

At intervals of our church history there have been instances where the fire of The Holy Spirit burned bright - however we feel instances can't quite compare to the heat generated on April 29, 1943.

On this day workmen working on the roof left the church for lunch and somehow a fire was started which consumed the whole building. What surely looked like a tragedy on that day of the fire would eventually be seen as a triumph of the spirit and a test of the will.

As it was our only building and since building materials were not available due to the war effort, and since most of all the young men were in service a great challenge was faced. This challenge was to the unity and perseverance of our people. While the loss was felt very deeply by many who had grown up in the building, perhaps this situation brought about one more of our "Defining Hours". For it was "out of the ashes" rose a determined group of Christians, meeting in make shift places for four long years - a determination, born in adversity and trial, to hold onto the faith of their fathers.

To this small group of “elders” (both men and women) - we owe a debt of gratitude, for it was their decision to hold on and look to an uncertain future, and to rebuild when consolidation with neighboring churches loomed as a definite and promising possibility. With the only things owned by this group being one acre of land, the pulpit Bible and several Hymnals. The temptation to take the easy way out loomed very large. Consolidation was voiced and recommended by some outside sources with immediate housing being offered. Rev. Henry Byrum, a native of this area, wrote a letter encouraging our people to consider going back into the Pleasant Grove Church as one church, placing it near the Camp Ground and calling it Pleasant Grove Memorial Church. This proposal was rejected.

With this being the situation our people made a very “landmark decision” - the decision to remain as Mineral Springs Methodist Church.

In order to keep the services going, just after the fire, the old John Gordon Store just north of the railroad was first used.

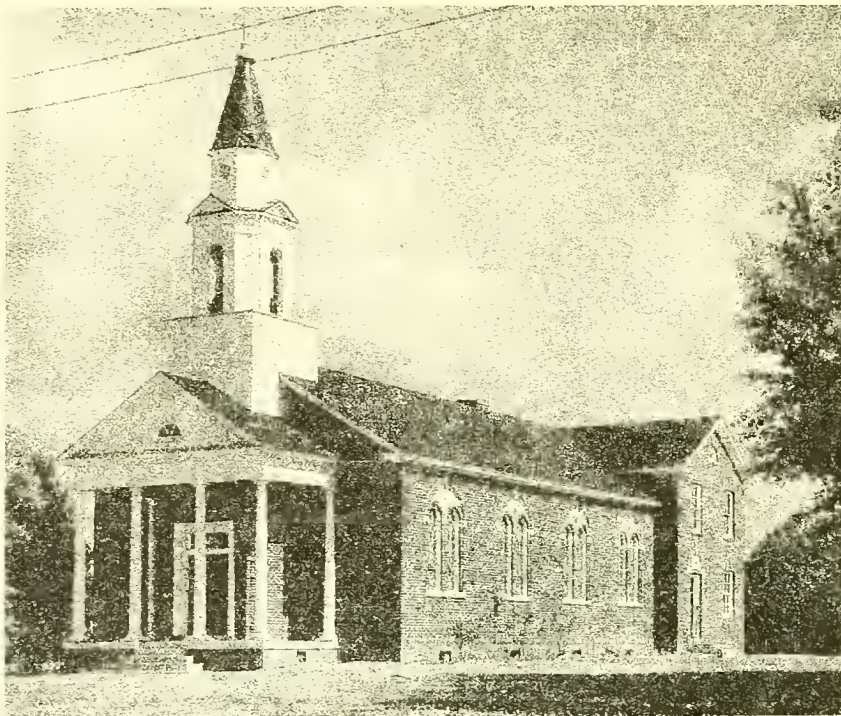
This building was a large one room structure with a few lights and windows only on the front. No paint was present inside or out and heat was by a big wood stove in the center of the room. Sheets were hung to separate the Sunday School areas. Many of our present members remember those times and can fill in information about the details of conducting a full church program in this facility.

The next stop for this wandering band was the Mineral Springs School building. This move brought much improvement and was much more satisfactory. Most likely, this school building was only one of a few to experience worship, baptisms and funerals in its facilities.

With the war coming to a close, in 1945, the young men began returning home. The very strict rationing was being lifted. A renewed energy became apparent in both community and religious life. The war had brought America out of the Depression and into an economic boom not experienced before.

As building materials became available a decision was made to rebuild. A building committee was selected as follows: F.T. Laney, Vaid Helms,

T.H. Haywood, M.M. Winchester, Baxter Howie, Harve Carter, Heath Davis, Lawrence Moser, Raymond Robinson, S.M. Kale, John Richardson, and Rev. J.B. Fitzgerald. With donations of lumber, (cut from the lands of Mrs. Nina Laney Geekie), labor and money, this new sanctuary was completed and occupied in 1947 and dedicated on June 11, 1949. The total cost was \$25,621.00.



New Sanctuary

The wage scale, at that time, ranged from \$.50 to \$1.00 an hour for those who had jobs. Many of our people were farmers in those years. The family of Hugh and Fannie Helms donated the original chimes for this new building.

During these first postwar years we were still on a four point charge with Waxhaw, Pleasant Grove, and Heath Memorial. This was our situation until 1950 when Waxhaw Church decided to become a station church (one with a full time minister). Mineral Springs was thrust into a situation where a decision was to be made-whether to go on being a charge with other churches or to go station ourselves-just as Waxhaw was doing. With a vision for the

future and a confidence for success, the membership voted unanimously to become a station church. This action took place on August 24, 1950. Surely this decision was one more of our "Defining Hours".

With faces set toward the future and a deep love for Christ, we were now set for full time ministry of worship, witness and service. One only has to survey some of those churches around us who had the opportunity to take the same bold step, in those years, but chose not to step out in faith. Thanks to that older generation of that day for their forward look. They preserved for us a place-and provided us a path for success. These actions brought new dimensions of worship, witness, mission and ministry-----a new day had arrived!

The first order of business for us, now as a station church, was the arrival of our new minister. Young David Charlton was chosen for us and arrived, by way of the Trailways bus. He seemed eager to begin his first appointment and to lead us into our new adventure. Memories still exist in our minds of Dave appearing in the second floor meeting room during the official board meeting and stating "Hello, I'm your new minister".

From this beginning we experienced new excitement and new growth from the postwar families bringing many new children into our membership.

A portion of Rev. Charltons first Pastors Report gives evidence of what was happening in our first year as a station church. "...I have nothing but praise for The Mineral Springs people in this their first year as a station church." "The budget was increased 150% and paid in full-the interest and enthusiasm is beyond expectation-The attendance has increased steadily on Sunday mornings." "The Church School is noticeably higher-the Sunday evening meetings are including the whole Church." "We now have Young Adult, Intermediate, Junior and Primaries meetings on Sunday evening." "Mid week prayer services have been started, the use of church bulletins has begun, new hymnals purchased and a nursery established." "The "Community Building" is very near completion and will serve for Church

School and Fellowship gatherings.” “Building committee has been selected for our new Parsonage. A lot purchased and the finance campaign is now underway.”

“The Church of God moves on.”

At this point in time, our rolls contained many newly married couples and these young adults provided new energy to support the growing ministries of the church. Rev. Charltons report for the next year is as follows:

As I write this report, I can look out of the church window and see a new home completed, the new Mineral Springs Parsonage...I know what is going on inside that home, the preacher's wife is cleaning, dusting, sweeping, etc. you see the parsonage has just been completed and the Pastor and his wife just moved in. That would be the main thing to report since the last Quarterly Conference, the completing of the parsonage...The building of a parsonage for a church of this size represents quite an achievement for this conference year. It has not been paid for but most of it has been pledged and we feel certain that in due time we will be free of debt. The building of a parsonage stands out even more when you consider the increased church budget. This is our second year as a station charge. Last year the budget was increased over 100% and it was met. This year our budget was increased \$1200 from last year, I am happy to report that this will be paid out. This is progress, Mineral Springs is on its way to be a self-supporting church.

There has been some gain in church membership over the past year. Seventeen were taken into the church this year, seven on profession of faith. We are not satisfied with this, but it is some progress.

The Community Building mentioned in the preceding report was to become a very valuable addition to both the church and to the whole community.

A lot was secured from T.P. Nesbit and two wings of the old Camp Sutton Army Hospital torn down-saving everything from the foundation, flooring, framing, plumbing, wainscoting, doors and windows, even the nails and reusing them in our new building. This building was 60' x 80' for the

main hall with two 24' square wings off the back. With volunteer labor both tearing down the hospital wing and constructing this building we then had a facility, which then became used to a very full extent.

To attest to the benefit this building has meant, a poem was written in 1984 -(the year it was torn down). It expresses some of the experiences enjoyed in this old building, and is as follows:

SO LONG TO AN OLD FRIEND

We pause to honor on this day
A real friend who passed this way.
We are thankful to the Lord above
For inspiring such friends to serve in love.
A friend, whose service was always yielding--
A friend who is called "The Community Building".
Within these walls fond memories abound--
Stand quiet now--and hear their sound.

The ladies of Home Demonstration, as they take their seat--
Saying in a loud voice, "We need a place to meet".
And soon thereafter an army hospital ward--
Was taken apart--board by board--
And carefully removed to the present site
To fit together again--just right.
When all was said and done
Our friends service was just begun.
For 34 years we've been truly blest
By this friend giving us it's best.
Not only serving The Home Demonstration--
But also "Community Development Organization".
The Volunteer Fire Department had it's birth here.
And the Scouts met here for 25 years.
Woodmen of the World here sharpened their axes--
And here you cried as you listed your taxes.

You voted to install those in high places-
And sang "Alleluia" with love on your faces.

All of the choirs through the years have sung here too-
Beginning with the song "There's A Suit Of Armor For You"

Suppers of chicken, fish, and oyster stew--
4-H, Bazaars, and Sunday School, too.
Youth Rallies, Family Night and Farmers Meetings-
Parties, Couples Club and ice cream eating.
Lion's Club, The Guild, Wedding Receptions--
WSCS and District Meetings no exceptions.
And last but not least serving out of our bounty-
For 3 years-the needs of the poor of Union County.

So now as we reverently pause--let us be observant--
To The Masters Words "WELL DONE THY GOOD
AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!"

By Bill Howie

Beyond the churches use as Sunday School, Scouts, Youth Activities, Church suppers, Christmas programs, Sub District Meetings and other church uses, this was truly a community building. As the Volunteer Fire Department didn't have their new building with meeting facilities and there being no other such facility the wider use of this building filled a broader need. All those groups written into the poem used this building. The last activity to use this building was one of utmost significance for it was here in this then unheated and uncooled facility that local church members led by Modene Howie formed what was then known as "The Sharing Station" - the forerunner of what is now Operation Reachout - the largest non tax supported crisis agency in Union County.

For the first two years with a full time minister, Rev. Charlton lived in an apartment in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vaid Helms. It was to this apartment that he brought his new bride. (Does anyone remember the reception they got?)

The need was soon recognized for a parsonage and our church took its next step in building. The building committee selected was as follows:

F.T. Laney, Vaid Helms, W.M. Niven, R.E. Robinson and Lawrence Moser. This building was completed in 1952, dedicated in 1957 and served through the ministry of Glenn Myers until 1991.

The ministers who lived in this parsonage were: Dave Charlton, Edgar F. Kale, Richard Jarrett, Wayne Billings, Earl Cook, Kent Outlaw, Marsden Kitley, Paul Cassell, Bill Harris, Benny Clodfelter, and Glenn Myers. One minister, Leon Atkinson did not live in the parsonage.

Coinciding with our becoming a station church and the consequent strengthening of our ministries was the surge of new births called the post war baby boom.

Since there was zero growth in our area of new families moving in from elsewhere all the growth that was taking place was of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and even 5th generation homefolk. These new children would be the first generation to face extreme changes in the American culture which was beginning in the late 1950's but which literally exploded on the scene in the 1960's and 1970's. Life, for these children's parents, was very different from the one they were too experience. For their parents, much of the week days were taken up with very disciplined work responsibilities on the family farm and in the home. There was much less involvement outside the home and much less distraction within, therefore, much more teaching was possible by the family in training in spiritual enhancement and the development of a system of values than is possible today.

In those pre World War II years the extent of the churches involvement with the children was limited to Sunday School, Worship, special children's day experience and church picnics at the mineral spring.

Later, going into the 1950's - as home duties decreased, there was added a strong Methodist Youth Fellowship program from Junior Youth to a strong Young Adult Fellowship. For a period of three or four years, this Young

Adult group put up and ran a hot dog and concession stand at the County Fair for fundraising purpose. Also in this period a strong scout program was underway and active. In the 50's the birth of one of the most significant and meaningful ministries for children and youth in our churches history took place. For it was in 1957 a group of our children met for what was to become known far and wide as Mineral Springs Youth Choirs - an endeavor which would be hard to match anywhere for a church our size. The story of these choirs will be told in a later section of these writings.

Even with the 'purging' of the rolls of around 50 names from 238 down to 185, in the mid fifties, our numbers were growing.

This growth fostered the need to expand our educational facilities and so once again a decision was made to build and a committee of Olin L. Murray, David Helms, Dewey Robinson, Tom Laney Jr. and Lawrence P. Moser were selected as a building committee.

The building was known as the Education Building and contained six classrooms and two restrooms with one of the classrooms being larger for special occasions. This addition gave us 12 regular classrooms in addition to using the Community Building for many purposes. It was finished in 1959 and dedicated in 1965. The cost was \$ 18,500.00.



Ground breaking of the Educational building

Ora Lee Laney, Glenda Couick, Rev. Kale, Lawrence Moser, Judy Moser, Dewey Robinson, Tom Laney Jr., Frank Godfrey, Dr. Miller, David Helms
Olin Murray

As it can now be seen these progressive moves by dedicated leadership were placing our church in a most favorable position to attract large numbers of children and youth to our various programs and ministries. During the 60's, times were changing at a rapid rate causing much pressure to be put on our youth.

The strength of our programs in those years helped to keep many young persons from turning away from their evangelical and conservative roots. It was in the face of this national 'turning away' that our Sunday School and Youth Choirs reached highs. The Choirs lasted for 30 years. It must be said that this strength came from dedicated leadership and parental cooperation.

Once again we faced decisions as to the need for more space. This was at the same time that our local Volunteer Fire Department was planning a new facility. With this in mind, it was decided that the church would throw its efforts, at building, behind the Volunteer Fire Department and assist in the construction of a facility which would not only serve to house the fire equipment, but would include a large meeting room with adequate kitchen and bath for large crowds up to 200 persons, for the entire community. This facility was completed in 1967 and for the next 17 years was used as our fellowship hall, using it many many times for our Christmas Programs, Church Family Nights, Fund Raising Events, and many other activities, receptions, showers, parties, and youth activities.

This endeavor consumed a very large portion of our members energy, time and money as the Fire Department records will show. By the record, our church members contributed a minimum of 80% of the planning, financing and construction of this fine facility. For a period of around 15 years our church members were the majority of the firemen serving the Department. Today there are only one or two serving as volunteer firemen. Our church has been and is still an active part of the community.

In the early sixties another happening took place which has, through the ensuring years, added significantly to our mission, our witness and our awareness of broader ways of serving. That was when the Wycliff Bible Organization located their JAARS Center nearby. From the onset we have been greatly blest by having families from this center come to us as active participants and leaders. Their times among us have greatly strengthened both the spiritual and physical realms within our membership. Some of those who have been with us for varying links of time were: Ben Friesens, Jim Daubenmier, Dick and Dorothy Lites, Ron and MaeEllen Ehrenburgs, Bill Martins, Star and Suzanne Koerner, Dave and Patsy Immell, Roy and Edie Gleason, Max Moody, Glen Smith, Bob Donaldson, and Leonard Adams.

The supreme dedication of these folk to take God's Word into areas where there is no written language has been and continues to be an inspiration to the rest of us. Through the years members of the church have been actively supporting these super missionaries.

Life went on in the early seventies despite a steady loss of a good number of the post war babies - to marriage, to relocation of jobs and to college. Our attendance fell some during the seventies, mainly to the above reasons and also without any moving into the community of new families.

One event took place in 1971 which was a positive move. This was the chartering of the United Methodist Mens Club in our church to go along with a very active Womens group which had been organized for 50 years prior to this. Both these groups will be related to later in this book in a special section.

In the opinion of many of our members another "Defining Hour" occurred in 1975 when we had our first "Lay Witness Mission" - an event in which 38 people from the two Carolinas and Virginia came to us for a Friday through Sunday visit. They came not to preach or to teach or to entertain. They came simply to tell us what Christ and the Christian walk meant to them. They showed us how the power of the Holy Spirit can transform so so

Christians into vibrant outgoing witnesses for Jesus Christ. This mission brought just about the whole Body here to greater depths of spirituality and dedication and to quite a few a complete turn around.

The original Lay Witness Coordinator died just two weeks before our scheduled mission. Floyd McCellan filled in and led the church through the weekend. The following is a write up by our Pastor Cassells after the weekend.

BUT THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED!

Our beloved brother Cecil Hannah went to be with the Lord. We felt hurt, and lost. Then a little man, physically, with a heart that beat with love beyond words poured himself out with his wife, Jesse. No humility was more pure, no love was ever so rich as came from these lovely people from a little country church beyond Statesville. Then one of our neighbors gave himself wholehearted, as “boot” revealed Jesus to us. Bobby Houser, a big country boy and his buddy James came down from the hills of Surry County, and just loved anyone within ten foot of them. My beloved friend, Bob Harris came from the country-side of Asheville to share a little of himself. He was such a blessing to the team members that Saturday morning, and he did not have anything to give but love. And, the beat goes on, the youth took up the chant. Chris and his lovely wife shared the joy of Christ and what He meant to them as they worshipped together. Rick, Bill, Pam, Joyce, Joy, Sandy, filled to overflowing to speak the same language of adults. Quoting from a love expression of Shirley Moser, “Thank You! I could not express what the mission over there meant to me and my family... I am so glad we came. I sure did get to know the people there better and love them all.” Mr. and Mrs. Bill Laney added such a joy to our grand week-end fellowship in Christ. With a number of others sharing this time with us. Around a blazing fire, in the shadow of a cross, something happened. Youth from our church, and those visiting us, streamed into the sanctuary one by one, kneeling, crying, loving, sharing, hugging. What wonderful joy filled the atmosphere under the dim-lighted-cross auditorium love flowed so tenderly. Your pastor and Floyd stood in some of these spots, where puddles of tears were left the night before, and goose-bumps speckled our backs as we remembered, BUT THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED!

For the next five years much time and energy was spent on “inward journeys” - moulding more faithful disciples from which brought us to a greater and a more sincere witness. Sharing groups, meeting in the homes, did Bible study, prayed together, shared the Gospel and their needs. Regular prayer time at the altar brought 12 to 15 people there every Sunday before service. Example of the enthusiasms gathered during and after this mission!

--Fifty seven members visited a church across the county with a mini version of a Lay Witness Mission.

--Thirty seven attended a day long Evangelism Rally in Greensboro

--For six or seven consecutive years 15 people went to Lake Junaluska for a weekend of renewal known as the Laity Conference.

--A number of members began going, as team members, on subsequent missions with several special person, going on more than 30 missions. These persons are John Hancock, John and Tammy Case.

--When other churches had their own missions our members furnished a lunch for their congregation and The Witness Team.

This even included a Baptist Church 20 miles away whose members did not even know we existed. The Lay Witness movement has meant so much to us that we have had three more since the first one. This first Mission propelled us into the 80's with a growing vision of what God expects of us.

Several other events helped guide us toward embarking on Gods vision for us at Mineral Springs - a vision which has caught hold and is still opening up for us this day. Another meaningful witness to the effect of these missions had, was the attendance of 15 - 20 youth and adults to two week long seminars on Basic Youth Conflicts in Charlotte lead by Bill Gothard.

The Youth Choirs were going strong in the 70's. In 1978 a library was established in memory of Baxter and Leona Howie.

In 1979, with the evangelistic and outreach fervor flowing, the church purchased a 45 passenger school bus for trips and for picking up children in the community whose parents were not attending church anywhere.

This part of the ministry worked for a good while and it was a blessing to the driver to see those little children standing out, all dressed up waiting for

us to bring them to Sunday School. The bus was also used for many groups like the youth choirs, senior group, and Methodist Youth Fellowship.

Other trips remembered was a special one when 44 of our people went on a three day retreat. Some went on a 15 mile canoe trip down the New River.

Later this bus was sold. In 1988, a van was purchased, and is being used extensively for trips by church members.

A strong and continuing result of the Mission has been what is called Sing A Long. This is a time on Sunday evening dedicated to strong Christian fellowship and sharing with enthusiastic singing various kinds of Christian music, testimonies, prayer and witnessing. Among those leading these informal and meaningful times have been Henry Blythe and Gene Richardson. These Sunday night events lasted as many as 12 years and recently in 1996 have been revived on a once a month schedule.

Along with the extra leadership of the JAARS folk and the stronger spiritual emphasis of our Lay Witness Missions and as an out growth of the strong sustained Youth Choirs, a Youth Camp grew out of our church and its leaders. The year it was organized was 1974. This camp provided very strong leadership and participation during those formative years.

Each summer 150 to 180 youth enjoyed a full week at Pleasant Grove - a week purposely set with strong guided spiritual encounters for our youth. The camp was held for 3 weeks each year. This camp still exists today and is known now as Camp Quest, a camp with a proven 16 year record of bringing many youth into a closer relationship with Christ, and many for the first time, all because of a vision born within the fellowship of Mineral Springs Church. It was nurtured into reality with a sense of dedication and mission not seen very often in our churches.

Our churches strong commitment to this camp in terms of leadership, volunteer adult workers, financial support, and young people attendance, continued for a period of 15 - 18 years. We can be justly proud of the prayerful and loyal support of this innovative action on the part of our people

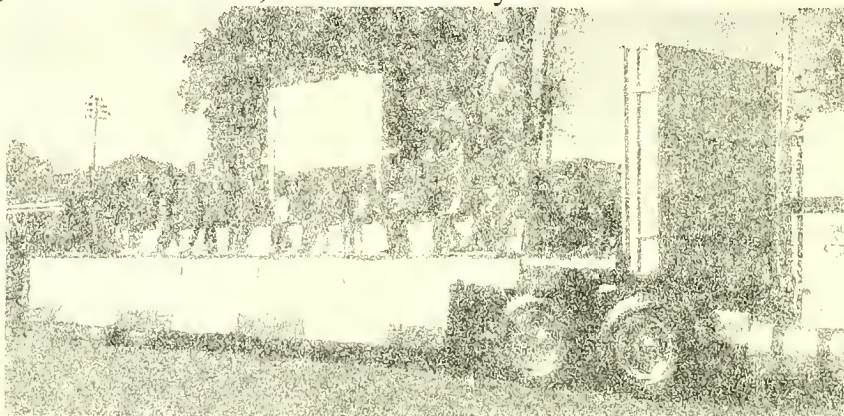
during those years. Our church was, without doubt, pioneering a move for which few other churches in our conference would even dare dream about.

This camp was indeed one of several activities which have marked Mineral Springs as a very unique church and a church which is doing outstanding ministries in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today the camp is operating independently from our sponsorship.

This camp came about as a vision of one person - Modene Howie. Along with a number of highly dedicated volunteers. She prevailed and persevered in the face of a good deal of apathy among some of the membership to bring the camp to a maturity such as breeds success and endurance. Some of the earliest steady year to year volunteers from our church were Clara McDonald, Isabel Martin, Doris Helms, Reed Bryant, Tommy Laney, Terry Merritt and others.

Another special ministry, born out of a vision, occurred at our church in the early 80'. This was accomplished when Sandra Jackson brought together a program for our children and youth, known as "The Searchers". Along with a few volunteers this group developed special weekday programs for three age levels - programs oriented toward making Bible study real for the children.

Weekly meetings with these three groups brought a deeper spiritual walk that meant very much to a group of young persons faced with so much peer pressure and influences which went against Christian principles. This program, "The Searchers", had on roll 47 youth and children.



At this same time Lynette Ehrinburg initiated a summer program for all youth known as "Back Yard Bible Club" - weekly meetings at various homes, bringing in children both from our church as well as others. A total of 59 children attended these special summer weekday activities.

A note in our church newsletter of 1981 lists the following activities sponsored in one summer for our children and youth and shows the energy put into our ministry to them at that time.

"Many children and youth have encountered Christ, in a meaningful way, some for the very first time as a direct result of our programs for them."

Church School - 47	Youth Choirs - 46
Vacation Bible School - 70	Scouts - 28
Five Back Yard Bible Clubs - 30	Methodist Youth Fellowship - 14
Summer Music Camp - 96	Confirmation Classes - 12
Searchers - 32	

Not bad efforts, wouldn't you say, for a small rural church with attendance around 115.

Pastors Report in 1984 Proclaims Us As "Builders"

During the past year, I believe our Church has been characterized by the term "building." The kind of building I want to emphasize here is spiritual. We have a "spiritual" Church, but thankfully not a complacent Church (we are not satisfied to stop growing spiritually.) I see significant spiritual growth taking place in so many areas:

1. Worship - Our worship and especially our music is a great blessing and up-lift. I feel my preaching has improved more this past year than in any other period of my ministry.
2. Sunday School - Our teachers have re-dedicated themselves and many pray at the altar before Sunday School each Sunday. Attendance was down

before our Lay Witness Mission, but since our attendance has been on the up-swing.

3. Lay Witness Mission - Through our Lay Witness Mission many people were touched by the Lord and have entered into a deeper walk as a result. An Intercessory Prayer Group and "Sunday Night Live!" (Adult Sharing Groups on Sunday night at the Church) were born that weekend and are helping people grow.

4. Prayer life - The Lord has been reminding us throughout the year of our need for daily quiet-time, prayer and Bible Study. We held three Prayer Vigils this year and encouraged fasting as a part of two of the Prayer Vigils.

5. Pleasant Grove Youth Camps - I saw many of our youth commit or re-commit their lives to Christ and grow spiritually.

6. Men's Fellowship - This group has been a blessing to me and I believe our men are growing spiritually as a result.

7. Spring Revival - This year's Revival brought Rev. Jesse Rushing who was a great blessing to us.

8. Sharing Group - A group meets weekly for sharing, prayer and Bible Study.

9. Bible Study - This group meets on Wednesday mornings and is doing a Survey of the Bible.

10. Music - I see spiritual growth experienced and brought about by our Adult Choir, Something Special Choir, Children's Choir, Youth Choir and Sing-a-long on Sunday nights.

A third kind of building may be referred to as human up-building. Our Church has a sensitivity to and love for people in need - both within and without the Church. It may involve a member in financial need, a young mother needing diapers for her child, a little girl needing a bone marrow transplant or a couple stranded on their way through Union County. Some of our members helped with the Overnight Shelter last winter. Many assisted

with needy families at Christmas. Much was done in response to the Tornado Victims in McColl, S.C. including food, clothing, and money and assistance in re-building homes. We gave our Feed the Hungry BBQ money and assisted with a Chicken Supper for McColl Tornado victims.

It makes me proud to serve with a Church that serves the Lord, the needy, and future generations with their self-less giving. We are blessed to be able to serve. I am thankful to be the Pastor of this Church. It is a blessing to me.

A NEW DAY DAWNING

At this point in our ministry, in 1997, we feel that it is correct to say that there are several contributing factors to our ministry as it is today with Christ's Body uniting in love, fellowship, witness, nurture, and outreach.

1. A very rich spiritual heritage given us by those going on before as the strong and lasting foundation upon which we are building.
2. The recognition, in the middle and late 70's of a new emerging need, in the face of a National demise of our Nations character, to first bring ourselves to deeper spiritual dimensions in order to face these new challenges.
3. The turn around in some parts of our General Church toward church growth emphasis and evangelistic endeavors and our local leadership quickly grasping the principles taught. In a short time the vision began to take hold with the obvious results showing today.
4. A strong emphasis on children and youth ministries - Scouting, Methodist Youth Fellowship, Youth Camp, Youth Choirs, Back Yard Bible Clubs, Searchers, Vacation Bible School, and Sunday School.
5. The recognition of the value and importance in a strong music program, featuring a strong emphasis on the spiritual witness available when music praises the Lord and comes from the heart not as a "performance" but as a witness to the Love of Christ and His Kingdom.

6. The recognition of the need for expanded facilities and the positive leadership exhibited in this direction provided new energy and unity and resulted in much support in our ministry, giving us space in which to grow in love and fellowship.

7. The ministries of several of our ministers beginning with Rev. Cassells willingness for us to take on a new approach to ministry with the first Lay Witness Mission with its widespread influence - the follow-up evangelistic ministry of Bill Harris - the vigorous and energetic and outgoing leadership of Benny Clodfelter and culminating, during these years, with the very effective leadership, of eight years, of Glenn Myers. (Our present minister of six years, Jim Yow, has been very effective in continuing to build upon all these principles and events.)

8. And finally, the real capstone to our movement in growth in numbers and ministries as one of the outstanding events in these efforts was the intensive Church Growth Consultation led by Dr. George Hunter of Asbury Seminary - a nationally recognized church growth expert. (This we will expand on later in this article.)

WE BEGIN TO BUILD FOR A NEW DAY

A campaign was launched, as described above, in the early 80's to study our future needs as far as facilities and growth were concerned. After study and congregational involvement proceeded, several ideas were advanced as to just what exactly we felt we needed.

In early 1983 a Study Committee of 19 members was activated and as a result of its findings and the congregations deciding upon what to do, a building committee and a finance committee were formed to finance and build a new Fellowship Building. This committee was made up of Gene Richardson, Henry Blythe, Jim Starnes, Wanda Conley, Mike Smith, Bill Howie, and Lawrence Moser.

Prior to construction a Finance Committee led by Steve Ervin planned and carried a very thorough and well planned campaign to the degree that the

total cost of this building was paid up in less than three years. The total cost was around \$200,000.00. Henry Blythe volunteered his time and expertise to be the general superintendent for the construction phase of this building as well as for the Robinson Building constructed during the same period. Among others - Gene Richardson and Jack Horton contributed much to these projects.

These buildings, named "The Christian Life Center", and the "Robinson Building", have added significantly to the expansion of our ministries and outreach and have provided adequately to the spaces needed for the growth that was soon to come.

The Church Growth Consultation, led by Dr. Hunter, and mentioned above, was as extensive and successful as about anything our church has attempted. Justification for the above statement lies in the results of the study being that Dr. Hunter took all that we had done and been engaged in up until the study and put us on the track to become all that we are today. This study was done in the summer of 1986.

The first order of business prior to this study was for the church to decide among five different avenues to embark on to better the ministry. The reasoning for a decision to do something in a more positive way was, in part, that in studying surrounding churches as well as our own, we came to recognize and accept the premise that today unless a church wants to and organizes for growth it will surely die, even though slowly.

After selecting Dr. Hunter to help us, he then put us on a three month evaluation and study. First, a Task Group was selected to lead the church along with our Pastor, Glenn Myers. This group consisted of Star Koerner, Bill Howie, Cleo Couick, Clara McDonald, Clifford Blythe, Lois Tyson, and John Hancock for special duties and a host of other members working with these. The extent of the study can be seen in the following listings.

1. Selection of the Task Group - A six week study of the book "Church Growth"

2. Setting the Hospitality - Getting 12 selected persons to write papers on the most pressing and important issue before the people - collect 10 years of data about our church - plus an overview of it's origin and entire history.

3. We were to seek out groups of people within our church including, new members within the last three years, which were to tell Dr. Hunter why they came to Mineral Springs. Thirty members from all parts of the church were to fill out a lengthy "Congregational health questionnaire". Three visitors who had not joined. Three inactive members, the church leaders, anyone who had any problems within the church, a neighboring Pastor, and also to be interviewed were the Pastor and his wife. Interviews were set up for each of these groups.

4. After all of these groups were interviewed a church wide meeting with a free flowing discussion was held. This concluded a wind-up for Dr. Hunter's visit.

Dr. Hunter then took all the information gathered back for study. In around three weeks we had the results of this study and a blueprint for successful church growth. His introductory remarks, in the study he returned to us, are these:

"The Mineral Springs Methodist Church is a strong promising 75 year old church, whose roots are in the great camp meeting evangelical tradition. The church now faces an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill the apostolic dreams in which the church was founded. The church is well positioned to become a significant growing church. It is located in a strategic location - with property which should last for a decade. (This report, remember, was written in 1986) The facilities are even better than some people think - especially with strong multi-use of them. There is a core group of lay people highly devoted to the church and its future and this devotion is long standing."

"To mention some of your strengths, at this point, I would begin. The Sharing Station is an unusual strength in your ministry. Your church's music program, while not involving as many choirs as you once enjoyed, is exceedingly well done. The choirs leadership of the worship service is perceived to be a genuinely spiritual ministry, a key part of the worship of

God, and not at all afflicted with the kind of “performance orientation” that characterizes too many choirs.”

“You are perceived to have a family closeness and at the same time this closeness which -- by a process like adoption -- is capable of letting a lot of new people into the family. Many of your people are walking strengths in ministry. I was impressed how many men are perceived to model something of the essence of Christ. I was impressed, when asking persons to talk a bit more about their choices of heroes and heroines and tell why they chose them, by the Christ like values and the real ministry of the church, instead of making heroes of the people who mainly serve the offices. Your emphasis on special occasions where you invite groups and programs into your times together is the kind of thing a lot of growing churches are doing - especially if you use these occasions to invite the undisciplined persons in your community.”

“Now for something I think you need to recognize and improve upon:

“Your worship services are still considered genuinely traditional whereas most all new younger persons are looking for somewhat more contemporary worship with contemporary hymns, with instruments, a very informal climate where people are encouraged in shirt sleeves, with a lot of praise and intercession, testimonies and laying on of hands. To accomplish the idea of pleasing two kinds of members, you may want to go to two services with one being mostly contemporary and one being a little more formal and traditional.

Some of your people do not want the church to grow. I think, however, that as these people get in fuller touch with the size opportunity that their church faces that they will really want to be a part of the decade which seizes and fulfill that unprecedented opportunity and will be profoundly grateful for their part, when they see a steady stream of people joining the church who are in the process of discovering the living God.”

“The “protective policy” regarding the uses of your buildings by people and groups in the community is undoubtedly a restraining force upon the fulfillment of your potential. I think that in time you will want to renegotiate this policy. Your church is a curious mix regarding the important dimension

of visitation outreach. You do it well when you do it but you don't do it very much. Visitation evangelism is the one area that the "amateurs are better at than the professionals. Caring lay people who reach out are about twice as effective as are the clergy."

"Now for some opportunities I would suggest for you to seize upon and become stronger in. I would encourage you, in the strongest terms, to develop a regular visitation program. I would counsel you toward much greater emphasis, once again, on youth ministry. A ministry, once vigorous, but now somewhat placed at a very low priority. I would encourage you to begin a continuing program of starting two or three new Sunday School classes every year. In some cases not being afraid to close some underachieving ones. New people like to be in on the ground floor and perceive ownership. Consider establishing a Day Care Center. You need regular employed staff for the nursery, assisted by volunteers. Consider hiring a church secretary. Get as many people and groups to use your facilities as possible. Look toward beginning an early Worship service and possibly two Sunday Schools."

In his discussions with us, Dr. Hunter also mentioned some physical changes that growing churches will need to do. He said "Be sure that the nurseries are as good and clean as the baby boomers home nurseries are, with all new fixtures and furniture and the room renovated" "Be sure that the restrooms are as nice as those boomers homes have. Be sure to start children's programs for their kids. Be sure to be willing to establish new Sunday School classes for these boomers that they can "own" and that meet their needs."

NOTE: We printed this much of a larger report as an indicator as to how we followed Dr. Hunter's suggestions and how we are succeeding in our ministries here because we had this consultation. (The full report is in the church files.)

Here, in 1997, a look back reveals just how this consultation was heeded and what actions were taken with the results obtained.

- With Jim Yows energetic efforts in leading a regular first time visitor visits, and follow-ups, our visitation program is well underway.

- Evident buildup of youth/children emphasis has taken place with both volunteer leadership and Marilyn Wooten and Kay Carnes's active participation on the part of the staff.

-From the time of the consultation, until today, careful attention has been given in the formation of new Sunday School classes, as the opportunity arises in all age groupings.

-Research has been done in Day Care activities with a beginning 'Mothers Morning Out' and a full Day Care as a goal yet to be achieved.

-Have added a paid staff member to assist the volunteers in the nurseries. Have hired a church secretary.

-Have hired an associate Minister, Rev. Bobby Green, Director of Christian Education, Marilyn Wooten, Music Coordinator, Kay Carnes, Custodians, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Steele, and groundskeeper, Jan Johnson.

-Have, in place, an excellent early Worship Service.

The idea to begin having an early Worship Service took several years, from Dr. Hunters visit, to become a reality. However, in 1989, at 8:45 a.m. on a Sunday morning, our first such endeavor took place with around 25 persons attending. From that date till here in 1997 the interest and enthusiasm has gradually increased until today the attendance has equaled that of the 11:00 a.m. service and the prospects seem to indicate that it will soon surpass it.

At this time research has been proceeding on some sort of a contemporary service becoming a reality here as these kinds of services are a large part of the church growth recommendations around the nation and are generally either the main service for many evangelical churches or an optional one for most all churches which are growing in these times.

As mentioned earlier, there was a process happening which we titled “A New Day Dawning” which was taking place, not necessarily with one special event but as a collection of several. Certainly, these several events, when put together can claim to be still yet another “Defining Hour” for our people. Tied together with the aforementioned events, several things were happening in the surrounding areas and with some eventful changes taking place in the lifestyles and thinking of people.

First, our general area began to experience a rapid rate of folk moving into the area, folk who are more mobile then in the past - giving us a wider area of influence.

Second, a resurgence of interest in these young parents in coming into church attendance.

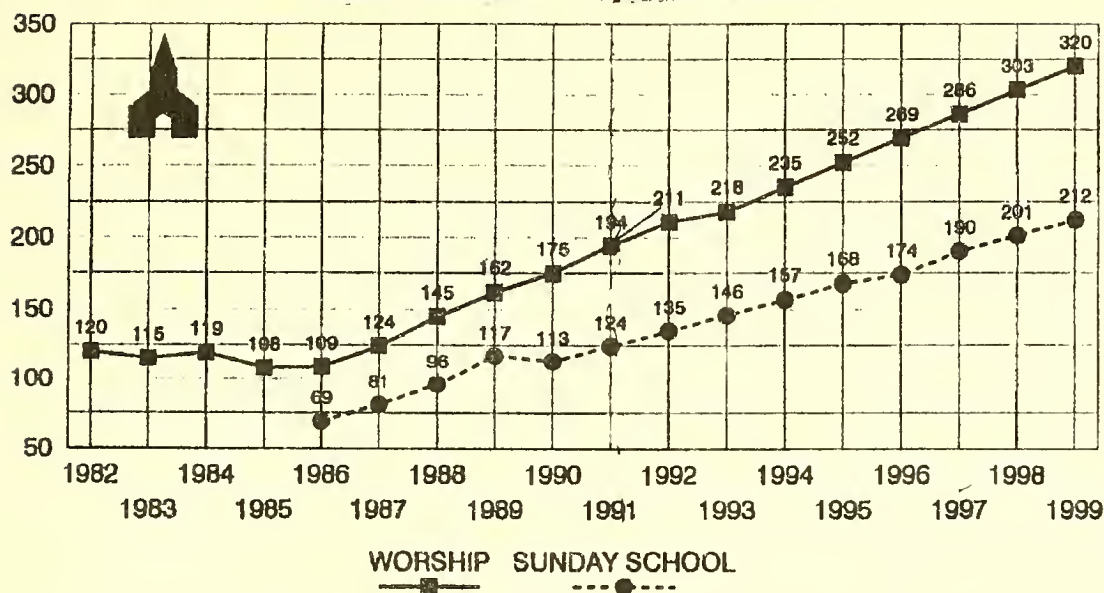
Third, a new concept of how people decide upon attending a certain church. Distance doesn’t make as much difference as in years past and denominational ties aren’t as sacred.

A church which meets their needs will be the one for them. It was a combination of several of things such as above that transformed the character and ministry of Mineral Springs Methodist Church from one which was serving well the needs of a closer group of residents to one of reaching out further and one that began to recognize the needs of a new generation of families and being willing to meet these needs with energy and acceptance.

For the core of those whose relationship here has existed for generations, this new experience has been interesting and has produced some innovative thinking. This “Extended Family” concept seems to be working well.

The following charts will attest to the success which has been achieved through this last period in our history. Along with showing the past trends, these charts will provide a vision for the future. Even though the numbers are impressive, it needs to be noted that our overall goal has not been so much numbers but the main thrust has been, and hopefully and prayerfully will continue to be, to bring persons into an experience of salvation and nurture through Jesus Christ.

MINERAL SPRINGS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH **WORSHIP AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE** **Historical and Projected Data**



MINERAL SPRINGS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH **MEMBERSHIP AND GIVING** **Historical and Projected Data**



The preceding charts show very clearly that many new and exciting families were coming into our fellowship. This continuing influx of new

members created what can justly be termed "a good problem" one which many of our Methodist Churches would like to have - this being the need to expand our facilities.

Once again, a period of study and planning brought about the plans for the addition of eleven classrooms, restrooms, and renovation of the Education Building. Dale King headed up a Building Committee of Anita Bishop, Jim Starnes, Henry Blythe, Gene Richardson, Lawrence Moser, and Al Simpson. The cost of this building and the paving of the parking areas was \$ 226,000.00, with this amount being paid off in three years. The renovation of the Education Building allowed for the moving of the Church Library, which had been on the second floor of the Sanctuary, to a new and more accessible and usable location. In the new Library, the materials for the book cabinets were donated by the Devon Wortman family, and built by Mike White. The original Library was given as a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Howie by the family.

With the continual growth which was happening, another need surfaced. This was the need for a new Parsonage. The original one, built in the early 50's had become somewhat outdated and was presenting problems. Therefore, a decision was made to construct a new one. The site of the older one proved to be not acceptable for our new one so negotiations with Frank Krauss III, owner of an adjoining house, were completed and this land purchased. This home that was on the lot was built and occupied for 70 years by the family of Hugh and Fannie Helms - a strong supporting family of our church. The home also served as Mineral Springs (previously Potter) Post Office for 60 years with the Helms family members serving as Postmasters.

A very gracious and much appreciated gift of \$25,000.00 was given by Richard and Katharine Steele in memory of her parents Olin and Maude Murray, for the purchase of this property. This enabled us to begin construction immediately on a new Parsonage. This Parsonage was completed in 1991. The total cost of the Parsonage was \$ 121,000.00, including furnishings. It was dedicated November 3, 1991. The old parsonage was sold to a church member and was moved off the church

property. The Building Committee was made up of Gene Richardson, Bill Southerland, Judy Wortman, Henry Blythe, Dale King, and Meg Giddings. Now, in 1997, we have a home for our Ministers family which can match up with most.

Continuing building activity brought about another addition to our property. A children's playground was constructed with much of the labor being done by Joe Cole with some other volunteer help. A picnic shelter completed as an Eagle Scout project led by Jonathan Yow.

With long range planning now even more a part of our situation, the need to acquire adjacent land while it was available was seen as a prudent move. Four acres just east of and adjoining our property was secured at a cost of \$38,000.00. This amount was pledged, in one day, by our church members and after this was done a very great surprise came about. Lawrence Moser then matched this amount so that the land was paid off and there was an additional \$38,000.00 to be put into our next building fund.

It is appropriate, at this time, to give due recognition of other gifts received. Our present organ, a beautiful and meaningful instrument, was given by the Blythe family.

The quality of our music program was enhanced greatly by the donation of 50 choir robes and storage cabinets by the Lawrence Moser family. In memory of Helen Polk Moser. These gifts add much to the overall ministry of our church.

At the present time, planning process has been completed and now the

church is moving on an expansion of the present Sanctuary which will seat an additional 80 - 86 in each of our two services. Plans are being mapped out which will add an expanded fellowship area and then in the long range plans will come a new Sanctuary. These three items are to happen in the above order and in a time table to be implemented.

The following report on our last six years progress was written, by request, by our present minister, Jim Yow.

In these years our growth has been very strong and many good things have been happening. A good portion of the story of these years can be found in the reports in Part II - "Our Special Ministries" Other insights can be gained by the Photo Albums in the Library and many home owned video cameras. Rev. Yows report is as follows:

Our church family is very grateful for the wonderful ministry that Glenn Myers, his wife, Susan, and sons, Jason and Robert had on our lives. Our church family will always be grateful for their impact on our lives. During the spring of 1991 it became apparent that the Myers family would be leaving Mineral Springs after eight wonderful years as our parsonage family.

On June 24, 1991 the Myers family left Mineral Springs. On the same afternoon our new parsonage family - Jim, Susan, Jonathan, April, and Michelle Yow - moved into our new parsonage. The Yow's never will forget the warmth shared with them as they moved in. There was a sign that read: "Welcome to the Yow's." All around were men and women helping to unload the U-Haul and bring in meals to help the new parsonage family to feel welcome and at home. How wonderful it was for the Yow's to move into a new parsonage. Shortly after their arrival the church had a welcoming celebration for them in the church's Christian Life Center.

During the first few weeks our new pastor met with the Pastor Relations Committee and "Nights at the Parsonage" began. These nights were simply times when the parsonage family opened the door of the parsonage and church family was invited to come in groups of twenty. This was a time for the church family to get to know the parsonage family and the

parsonage family to get to know the church family. We shared many of the hopes and dreams for our church and looked at where we hoped to be in five years.

Shortly after our new pastor arrived he and Finance Committee chairperson, Ray Ross, started talking and making plans to pay off our new parsonage. With the support of the church family the debt was paid in full. A dedication of the parsonage was held in November 1991 led by District Superintendent Lloyd Hunsucker, Glenn Myers, and Jim Yow. Following the Dedication Service an open house was held.

Planning for our future, the decision was made to sell the former parsonage rather than remodel it for a youth building. Sealed bids were accepted, and Hal and Darlene Rape purchased the house for \$6,500. In May 1992 the former parsonage was moved from the church property down Highway 75 where it is located today.

In the early fall of 1992 the Planning Committee made a proposal that we remodel our present Educational Building and build an additional eleven classrooms. The Building Committee was made up of Henry Blythe, Jim Starnes, Al Simpson, Gene Richardson, Dale King, Anita Bishop, Judie Wortman, and Lawrence Moser. Much of the work was done by men of our church and what we could not do was done by various sub-contractors. It was wonderful to watch our church family work together to build the new Educational Building. In March 1993 we had a Consecration Service and entered the new facility for an open house after Dale and Anne King cut the ribbon. We are grateful for the financial support of The Duke Endowment, Albemarle District Mission Society, and our church family. For the first time we sold bonds to our church family and financed our building ourselves. In the Spring of 1996 our Educational Building was paid off in full and our District Superintendent, Rev. Bill Bass, lead us in a Dedication Service.

In the Spring of 1994 our church decided that we would add two part-time staff positions - one for a director of our children's choir and the other for a director of youth ministry. Both of these additions have added so much to our church. Our first Children's Choir Director, Kay Carnes, is still with us. She has done a wonderful job of incorporating so many children into our choir. Each year Kay has from 35-45 children in choir. The number of

families that Kay's ministry has brought in our church is very exciting. Kay certainly has been a blessing to our church. Mark Carnes was our first Youth Director. Prior to having a youth director we had volunteers like John Case, Tommy Laney, Tammy Case, and Gina Roberts. Beginning in 1992 Peggy Bridgers worked with our children and youth while she was attending seminary at Duke University. During her ministry our youth group grew to approximately 30 youth. Many of the youth who were attending our youth group were from our community. In December 1995 Mark resigned to take a full-time position. During the interim Kathy Burrill served as our youth director on a volunteer basis.

In early 1997 our church family decided to hire our first full time staff person. We were excited to find out that there was a possibility that Marilyn Wooten may be available. In April 1997 Marilyn came to Mineral Springs. What a difference she has made in the life of our church. She has such a warm and caring spirit. Her talents and leadership abilities are outstanding. We certainly have been blessed as Marilyn leads a team of volunteers in Sunday School, in youth and so many activities around our church.

Excitement continues to be in the air as our church continues to grow and reach new families. In 1991 we averaged 177 in worship and 124 in Sunday School. Today we average 257 in worship and 171 in Sunday School. As we look at our growth there is not a single reason, but a combination of reasons. We now have programs for all ages. When you try to meet the needs of people of all ages people respond. Another reason why our church continues to grow is our location. Many people are moving out of Mecklenburg County into Union County. Many subdivisions are being built around us and people are looking for a church home. As long as we reach out and show people we care about them we will be amazed at how God blesses us.

As a church we are grateful for the many ways God is using us. But we must always remember it is God that gives us the growth.

PART II

OUR SPECIAL MINISTRIES

WHERE THE CHURCH MEETS SOCIETY ON MORAL/ETHICAL ISSUES

John Wesley said, "There is no social holiness when there is no personal holiness and there is no personal holiness when there is no social holiness." In this statement - a statement lived out to the fullest by Wesley - is contained the essence of Christian living in its entirety.

Wesley fought the social, ethical and moral issues of his day as vigorously as he preached the personal gospel of salvation. The Methodist Church has a rich history of taking firm stands through the years on the issues of concern in each period of it's life.

While, during the first 50 years, our witness of the moral issues here at Mineral Springs was rather clear and, because of conditions of life at that time, was usually limited to working in our own neighborhoods. However, as the pace of life accelerated in the 50's and 60's, it became evident that the American character was deteriorating at a rapid rate and that the battle would now have to be taken out into the nation and the world. Christian values and beliefs were being assailed as never before.

During the late 70's, 80's, and early 90's our church began to face the reality that Christianity was in a war and was already losing it without even realizing that the war was on. The approach now was not only work within the walls of our own church but to begin to learn the tactics necessary to have some positive effects on life as lived out in our communities and in our nation.

Our Commission on Church and Society has mobilized and has been, and still is, very actively involved in a three fold approach to the issues we face today. Our goal, through the last 20-25 years, can be described by three words - Educate, Advocate, and Activate. We have consistently brought to our people opportunities to learn more about the issues and how the Bible and our church speak to them. We have made available many various kinds of opportunities for our members to begin to act on these issues in ways both inside and outside the local church.

We have made continual efforts to get our people to begin advocating moves designed to influence, on the one hand, legislation, on another the media, on another, the general public. Through the years literally scores of letters have been written to the newspapers, to industries, to legislatures and to other groups with some very positive responses and a great deal of success. Petitions are sent year by year to our Annual and General Conferences on some very important matters and have been successful in a small but meaningful way, becoming the actions and/or statements of our National Church.

We sponsored a Decency Week (set out by county commissioners) which included a Decency Rally drawing 750 people and resulting in many follow up actions dealing with pornography and obscenity. Two of our members led in three separate District Workshops on these issues. Some of our members have served on various District and Conference groups which dealt with Sunday School Growth, Alcohol, Drugs, Homosexuality, Abortion, Violence and World Hunger.

Six of our members took part in the ProLife Rally in Washington, standing up for the protection of the unborn, and in 1997 The Annual Conference adopted our petition strongly opposing the partial birth abortions.

One of our members, Bill Howie, has become active enough in Annual Conference activities that he has been an elected delegate to four Jurisdictional Conferences and three General Conferences and has reported some success with some of our petitions. One outstanding success story is our churches petition to the General Conference regarding the Alcohol/Drug problem. The General Church was putting out a rather positive effort to curtail the growing drug problem. We, here at Mineral Springs, recognized that it consisted mostly of good statements and goals but it did not provide a vehicle to make the goals attainable. Our petition, was to create standing committees on Drug/Alcohol with adequate financing and staff in the General Church.

As a result of this one petition, from a small country church, has resulted in there being a standing committee on the General Church level and the same in 57 Annual Conferences and untold numbers on district and local church levels.

We believe that indeed one person or a few, or a local church can accomplished good things for the Kingdom of God, if there is dedication and perseverance among the members. As Wesley said, "There is no personal holiness if there is no social holiness", and we subscribe to that statement 100%. "Faith without works is dead".

Experiences have taught us that the teeth are placed in any motion/petition when the word Direct is placed where it does just that - Directs that a certain move be made and that adequate finances are directed to be applied. Statements recommending such actions have a way of getting lost within the General Church.

Another success story, still dealing with the Alcohol/Drug problems in America, was passed at General Conference, from our church, which directed the Methodist Publishing House to begin a more forceful teaching and advocating of abstinence, as a faithful witness, to our curriculum. Most of our Churches energy, in this area, has been on intervention and treatment which is an important part of dealing with the problems. However, as is quite evident, there is no problem deriving from not ever taking the first drink. It is tragic that 14 million problem drinkers had the inception of their problem with "a first drink".

As a result of studying church and Sunday School growth in books, papers, and attending seminars, our church sponsored a petition challenging the Annual Conference to set a goal of creating 500 new Sunday School classes within our churches.

The importance of the Methodist Church working on Sunday School growth is reflected in the statistics of a 50% decline in 30 years of Sunday School attendance. This petition passed - a task group was chosen, (a local member was one of five persons charged with this responsibility of bringing a plan to the conference). This was done and now is a priority within our Conference.

In 1997 still yet another petition opposing a last minute and unnecessary act termed "Partial Birth Abortion". This was adopted by a wide margin to become our Annual Conferences official positions on this issue.

World Hunger has been another focus of our church with a continual program of active participation in the relief of this hunger that affects at least one billion people continuously. To, at least a core group of our membership, following both Wesleys and the Bibles mandates dealing with social and ethical ills of the day is a priority. Jesus said, “Forasmuch as you have done it to these - you have done it to me” and “Forasmuch as you have not done it to these - you have not done it to me” -- depart from me -- I never knew you.”

This is the challenge for Christians today.

A LASTING LEGACY

Little realization did those leaders have of the impact and far reaching effect of what they were doing that day, in 1957, when they called together the small children of the church to organize a children's choir.

This call was not extraordinary - almost all churches have their children to sing together at some time and at special times in the past our children had been together at special times. However, very few churches can equal the accomplishments which took place over the next 30 years through the outreaching witness and ministry of this group. For it was during the next 30 years that a tradition was formed, and a ministry begun which would spread from Virginia to Georgia with lasting influence on the life of our church and several other neighboring churches.

For a ministry to flourish and endure for those 30 years, with as much success and impact as the Mineral Springs Youth Choirs have accomplished, extraordinary talent, sacrifice, and perseverance must be present in its leadership. While, during the 30 years, there have been numerous persons who have given valuable assistance for periods of time, in many forms, two standout - Modene Howie and Clifford Blythe.

For it was, without doubt, the talent, creativity and dedicated energy and perseverance of these two that brought these groups out of the level of ordinary young peoples singing and acting groups to heights rarely attained in churches of any size.

From the very beginning the original group of young children began to be recognized for their enthusiastic singing and began to be invited to sing at area churches as well as for civic groups, in Christmas parades in Monroe and Charlotte, and at other gatherings. Many of those who were in this original group stayed with the choirs throughout the entire 30 years of their existence.

With Modene's constant either writing original music or arranging other songs to suit the situation, and playing the piano, and Clifford's energetic enthusiasm in leading the group up front this group early on began to take on the characteristics of excellence that were to follow them throughout the choirs history.

Records reveal that, during those 30 years, the choirs and/or choir subgroups, have performed as many as 300 separate times away from our churches own activities which within themselves happened on a very regular basis. These performances took the choirs across the Carolinas and into Virginia and Georgia. Also, present records reveal that over 400 songs were memorized and used by these choirs during their existence and for the many types of programs presented.

The image and reputation of these choirs reached the youth of other churches (Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterians) to the extent that many joined, and were welcomed, just as enthusiastically as our own members and were just as faithful. At the height of participation, present records reveal over 100 children and youth taking part and this at a time when our membership was less than one half of that here in 1997.

An annual event was established and endured for 19 years, which both the young people and their audiences looked forward to with much excitement. This was Sing-A-Rama - a two hour musical - much like a Broadway musical where fun type music as well as uplifting serious types and individual performances were the thing. Rock and Roll types of music were not used in these times. The event allowed the group and individuals to display their talents and to learn to express themselves through these shows in manners conducive to Christian character development.

Audience participation was so great that in certain years the Sing-A-Rama

was done on two nights even with the Parkwood High School Auditorium seating over 600 persons. Audience participation came from all parts of Union County.

To produce such a show as was done required constant rehearsals for three months, much music writing and arranging, costuming to be done, staging built and sound and lighting programs produced. Parental assistance was strong at these times.



Sing-A-Rama Middle 1970's

As the children grew into their teen years, the leaders homes became places where many of them came to talk about their experiences and concerns with the leaders in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

The objectives of having these choirs were as follows:

1. To train and bring out the musical abilities of the youth
2. To instill the use of talents for Jesus Christ
3. To assist in establishing group loyalty among the members
4. To provide a safe zone for teenagers for building of characters
5. To instill in the members a sense of ministry, witness, and outreach

To assist in this last mentioned objective the choirs undertook ministries beyond their music. One of the first outreach ministries was the support of two orphans - one at The Methodist Children's Homes and one through The World Vision overseas.

Our first organ purchase was a project completed by the choir. Then came two new pianos and a sound system. To raise the financial support for these, and other projects, the choirs sponsored Dollar A Month solicitations, collect and sold waste paper - the largest single load weighing in at 17,000 lbs. - sold donuts, on one special occasion sold 2500 dozen in one sale - yes 2500 dozen, collecting bottles and other recycle items and other one time fund raisers.

A crowning accomplishment of this program was the establishment what was first called Pleasant Grove Music Camp, a full blown week-long encampment with two separate weeks for different age groups being together. Around 160 were attendance for several years. As the years passed it was seen that this camp could be much more than music as a strong complement of leaders began to bring spiritual development as the key to the camp. Many youth met Christ for the first time in those early years and others learned much about their Christian walk. The camp thrived in this atmosphere and is now known as Camp Quest. To know that this camp came directly out of the Youth Choirs experiences is something of which our Church can be justly proud.

While the original group was still pre-teens they had a record made at Arthur Smith Studios which was a big hit with our people. Then later still another one was done with some still available today. On one occasion a group of 10 youth - called "Something Special" - traveled to Nashville to make still another recording. This one was what is called "middle of the road" type songs - not spiritual and not Rock and Roll. Several radio stations in the area played this one and the response was very strong to hear it again and again.

Many of the groups learned to sing solos and did these in many places. One special group of the pre-teens, in the early years, formed a Barbershop Quartet - Marilyn Blythe (Wooten), Reed Bryant, John and Eddy Howie known as "The Cousins Four". This group became quite good at this type of harmony and sang at all kinds of places including church, civic clubs, and 4 H conventions with a high light being invited to Charlotte Ovens Auditorium as guest singers at the annual Barbershop Singers Convention.

During some of the years the parents of the choir members formed

Sing-A-Ramas and were invited to Lake Junaluska for the Annual Conference.

The rich legacy left by having these choirs, lives on in the lives and ministries of many adults today in our church and others as well.



Youth Choir in late 1970's

The following articles are inserted here as complimentary writings by request of the author of this church history. One of these requested articles speak to the memories of the choir in general and two speak to the leadership of Modene Howie and Clifford Blythe.

When I was about 15, I heard a lot of my friends at school talking about being in the Sing-A-Rama, Ronnie McGuirt and his Mom skating down the auditorium all dressed up and other exciting ventures so I thought I'd like to give it a try. Plus there were several cute guys I sure would like to get to know better. So one Sunday, Cindy Haywood and I decided to go give it a try. It was wonderful. We gradually became one of Modene's "kids". She's always been so good to all of us. We would practice on Sundays in a room here at the church, full of chairs, with music notes on the walls. Modene

gave me so many opportunities and made me love music more and more. She always made each one of us feel special. I also remember all the wonderful people who came to see us sing on Sunday mornings or whenever we went anywhere. I can still see their smiling faces. They will never know how much their kindness and support meant. I continued to go to Mineral Springs Church off and on for many years. It really is in my heart my “home” church. I have met so many wonderful people there and felt God’s presence many times. Thanks so much to all of you who helped give me so many wonderful memories.

Sheila Ghant Kiser

One thing I am really thankful to God for is friends. He gave us friends to help us through bad times, sad times, and those times when things happen that we just do not understand. He also gave us friends to enjoy the good times with. God’s love can grow even more when it is shared with good friends whom you really love.

A special friend that I am sure God sent to me is a lady named Modene Howie. As a young boy of thirteen, I was shy and unsure of myself. Unable to hear very well, I did not participate in any group activities, especially in church.

This lady named Modene took an interest in me. I remember my voice was changing at the time and one of the first things she ever said to me was, “Bring your voice down. It’s beautiful and you can control it.”

The look on my face probably said I thought she was crazy. “Who did she think she was and what did she know?” I thought to myself. I practiced controlling my voice and it worked. I did not squeak and talk awkwardly for very long.

Later she told me, “I have something I want you to do.”

“I am not going to sing,” I exclaimed. I loved singing at home alone in the living room with Mom, but I was not going to sing at church.

“What I have in mind is not singing. I want you to help me play a joke on

some people,” she said sounding so reassuring and convincing. I told her I would think about it.

Years before, she had begun a community tradition called Sing-A-Rama. Each spring, she wrote and directed a musical show, much like a Broadway musical, which showcased the talents of people of all ages from the Mineral Springs Methodist Church.

Modene was a very persuasive lady and convinced me to be in on her secret. I was to be a surprise guest at the Sing-A-Rama that year. I walked out with balloons tied to my backside and got a lot of laughs. I was thrilled at the feeling of being on stage and hearing applause sprinkled with laughter.

She never gave up on me, although I resisted her a lot in the beginning. She was determined to become friends with me, and I was determined to have nothing to do with her. I did not understand her attention. I wondered why she was so determined to have me participate. I did not want to be a part of that group at church. They had been together all of their lives and I was a newcomer. I thought that I would never fit in. She knew otherwise.

It was not long before she had me singing tenor. By the time I got my first hearing aid, I was good at finding my pitch. In fact, she always told me that I had perfect pitch. I did not realize until I was an adult that she really meant it and it was the highest compliment she could have paid me. Too bad I did not have the beautiful voice to go along with the pitch. Mine was just average sounding, sweet and serene with no volume.

As the Sing-A-Rama grew and grew each year, so did my part. I always looked forward to the springtime to see what she had in store for me that year.

One year I will never forget took place in the early seventies. A new song by Melanie, called Brand New Key, had hit the airwaves. Modene decided that I should play a little girl dressed in pantaloons, wear roller skates, and skate down the aisle to the stage.

My mother worked hard making me a rather large pair of lacy pantaloons of white material with red lace borders. I wore a wig and sunglasses as I

started down the center aisle at the Parkwood High School auditorium. As I raced down the aisle, I began to wonder how I would stop. The aisle was sloping downward and I had not practiced skating there.

I hit the front of the stage pretty hard, and rolled right over onto the stage. This was a strange sight, especially for a two hundred and fifty pound man dressed as a little girl.

The audience was hysterical and Modene was laughing hard from her place at the piano. What was to come next was a surprise for me. She had turned the tables on me. As I began to sing, "I've got a brand new pair of roller skates," amid the laughter arising from the audience, my mother rolled out from left stage riding a tricycle, wearing sunglasses and a matching baby girl outfit like mine.

By now the people in the audience were in the aisles laughing. It was a great moment. From that moment on, I knew the excitement and joy a performer feels on the stage. We went on to sing the song together and brought the house down. I will never forget that experience.

Modene always knew what was right for me. One year, a few years later, she said, "Now it's time for you to write one."

"Write one what?" I exclaimed. I thought she was crazy, but I did not want to say it.

I know that you can write a Sing-A-Rama, and I know you want to do it, so do it. She is a person most people can never say no to. At the time, I could not either. At that moment, Florence Belch was born, my first effort at writing a musical program to be staged for production. I will never forget, after the program, one lady came up to me from the audience and said, "You make a better woman than I do."

For many years, our choir was a strong, solid group determined to show our love for God and each other. We traveled to many different churches all over the south and enjoyed singing our hearts out. At one time we had over 45 members, in the senior youth choir, in addition to two younger ones, and

45 members, in the senior youth choir, in addition to two younger ones, and no one could top our sound. We were really good. The friendships and bonds that we made during those years will always be the most dear for us.

Ronald T. McGuirt

Mother (Clifford Blythe) was the “behind the scenes” heroine of the Mineral Springs Youth Choir in those early days!! She always claimed she didn’t have talent, but just a willingness to help...not so! Her talent was helping us to sing together and smile... “waving” her hand so we knew when to start and stop...keeping us quiet when we needed to listen...having our music sheets organized and ready...getting us at the right time to the right place (whether we were selling 1000 dozen Krispy Kreme do-nuts @ 2 dozen/ \$1...or riding on a float or a firetruck in the Christmas parade!)...those things that ‘unsung heroes’ do to insure that the show will go on! Dad (Henry Blythe) drove the car and took us to churches from here to Virginia, set up the risers probably a million times, worked until midnight finishing the Christmas float, as well as countless other tasks. And they both made sure that Sunday evening was church night...nothing would get in the way of weekly choir practice! Sing-a-Rama was a family affair and the Parkwood auditorium (the only place big enough to house the crowd) became almost a “sacred” place to all of us because of it! Reminders from both parents to collect the monthly payment from my “Dollar-a-month Club” members (fund-raiser to pay for our first church organ!) helped to insure the success of our cause. WOW! There isn’t space to share the hundreds of other memories!!

Marilyn Blythe Wooten

MISSIONS

The Mission outreach of our church is at a relatively strong level with much emphasis put on local and area outreach and the regular support of our friends from JAARS.

In addition to the direct support of several JAARS missionaries and to

special ministries of their outreach, the church has sponsored Mission Weekends with many different mission agencies coming to us with their programs and needs and our consequent donations on a one time or regular basis.

Our regular budget apportionment provides mission support annually. World Hunger Relief has been a good part of our history with the annual cluster churches "Feed The Hungry Barbecue" participation for many many years and other one time support of other hunger agencies, such as UMCOR, Bread for the World, Feed The Children, World Vision, and relief to Mozambique.

More on a local or area basis are the following projects our support has gone to. The Children's Home, Hospice, Jail Ministry, Operation Reachout, Meals on Wheels, and daily nutritional Meals here at Mineral Springs Church.

A truck load of emergency supplies went to relieve the West Virginia flood and several teams have gone to work on the relief of the damages done by tornadoes in South Carolina and Hurricane Fran.

Active donations and labor have been provided in joint efforts with other churches in replacing one local home destroyed in Hurricane Hugo and providing a Habitat For Humanity home in the neighborhood.

Within the church itself, a fund is maintained and used on an emergency basis for people around us. Realizing that to become sensitized to the needs, local and worldwide, we make attempts to educate our people to these needs by various means - The weekend specials, videos, on scene participation and other means. We have now begun to participate in a gleaning network for left over food stuff in farmers fields. Needless to say, one of the most outstanding efforts in missions has been Operation Reachout, a report of which is in another section.

EVANGELISM

The foundational Methodist heritage is evangelism - the winning of souls for Jesus Christ.

As within the general Methodist Church, we here at Mineral Springs have experienced a changing attitude as to how evangelism is to be carried out, and possibly even what it really means.

From days when the Revivals were a reality and many persons lives were radically changed, many times instantaneously, to today's quiet affirmation at the time of joining the church we have seen such a change. Within these changes, our church has attempted to meet the need for introducing people to Christ, also in changing attitudes and methods.

Indeed, many of us remember the Camp Meetings and our own revivals, plus regular weekly preaching, where the challenges were put to us in unrelenting force and power. As results of this type evangelism we were witnesses to many strong and lasting transformations.

As in the General Methodist Church, the emphasis on straight soul winning began to be replaced with other priorities. While this was happening in the larger church, we here locally were holding on to some of the older ways while also moving to new ways of reaching people.

Our Lay Witness Missions and other strong emphasis on evangelism weekends brought as into new and exciting relationships with Christ. The Sharing Groups helped sustain these new found energies. Then we began to learn new ways such as "Friend Days" for getting folk to attend our church.

In the late eighties a church wide program called Vision 2000 emerged on the scene. We immediately took advantage of this, applying its strengths regularly for several years. This did indeed bring our attendance up.

The Church Growth Seminar, discussed in other parts of this book, gave us a new energy and vision. Today, to the most of us, the real power of the altar call and the real results of personal one on one witnessing have lost most of their power and the new ways are dominating the scene.

Today, for the underlying move in evangelism, we are counting on, our location, our reputation as a growing Methodist Church and a very active follow-up of our first time visitors which now are coming at a very good rate. As individual members, some are attending Promise Keepers Rallies, counseling on Billy Graham Crusades, and seven have participated in the three day ministry of "The Walk To Emmaus". Several are still going on Lay Witness Missions to other churches.

Today we can sum up our priority in a three part statement of our mission:

- To bring people into a real lasting relationship with Christ
- To nurture them into a mature walk
- To motivate them to witness to the love of Christ through outreaching ministry

MUSIC

Music at Mineral Springs has been a very strong part of the ministry for a lot of years. In The beginning the church didn't have a piano or much in the way of song books. The first book used was The Young Peoples Hymnal and would have been without accompaniment.

After moving into the white church, first called Mineral Springs Chapel, a piano was obtained and even an old pump organ was used for a while.

During those formative years Singing Schools were popular where the children would come for all day sessions lasting a week. Mrs. Ethel Helms related that she had attended these sessions and Mr. Plyler, the instructor, would let the group go over to the "public well" to get refreshed during the break time.

Mrs. Blanche Aldridge and Libby Savage, her daughter, were among the earlier pianists, with people remembering how good Libby could play. Other pianists, through the years have been, Viola Doster, Vivian Winchester, Ora Lee Laney, Bessie Howie, Helen P. Moser, Isabel Martin, Marcene Robinson, Mrs. Walker, Modene Howie, Maxine McGuirt, Marilyn Blythe, Gwen Tyson, Shelia Ghant, Irma Daniels, Linda Ervin, Patsy Ballard, Sue

Thornton, Dawn Roberson, Christa Cook, Betty Jones, Meleah Lemmonds, and Jillian Southerland.

The Adult Choir prevailed through the 30's, 40's, 50's, and 60's on about a normal level for a church our size. Then in the 60's and up the children and youth choirs began to be recognized far and wide and began to furnish more adult musicians. A report on these special groups is found elsewhere in this history.

Through the 70's and 80's the program became progressively stronger in the Adult Choirs and continued with activity on children's level.

With the establishment of an early worship service, the music in that area began to become a reality in a short time. Patsy Ballard and Sue Thornton now lead this early choir which is made up of many enthusiastic members.

The eleven o'clock choir is led by Modene Howie and Christa Cook.

The church has added Mrs. Kay Carnes, as Music Director, and she is now bringing a growing children's choir along at a fast rate and doing a good job there.

Presently our organists are Maxine McGuirt, Sue Thorton, Kay Carnes, Christa Cook, Jillian Southerland, and Modene Howie.

The combined Adult Choirs number over fifty. A church band is now being organized with Bill Southerland as it's leader. In addition to the band we have several individual guitar and flute players. A generous gift of Hand Bells, in memory of her father, Hubert Helms, was given by Jim and Gerri Plyler. This enables us to now have Hand Bell Choirs. Music is indeed a strong ministry at Mineral Springs United Methodist Church.

This endeavor follows directly in the footsteps of the Wesley's as from the very first years Methodist have been known as a Singing People, therein lay much of the power in the movement that transformed the face of England and crossed the Atlantic to become a power that helped bring America to its Christian foundations. Their singing was a joyous outward expression of a real inward experience with the living power of Christ.

The power of real heartfelt singing can be shown in the following lines of an early hymn - One man with a dream - shall go forth and conquer a crown - and three with a new songs measure - can trample an empire down. Such can be the legacy here for us in our day.

MINERAL SPRINGERS

Late in the 70's and on through the 80's Methodism was becoming a church with larger and larger numbers of it's members becoming Senior Citizens. This trend still exists in much of the Methodist Church - however in our church here in Mineral Springs we are excited about how this trend is reversing itself as we are now attracting many young parents into our fellowship.

Recognizing the need to focus some of our growing churches energy on those who were indeed the backbone of our church in the past, this group of members decided it was time to organize into a body that would meet some of it's special needs - fellowship, sharing, supporting, and outreach within itself. Thus, in the late 80's this group met, decided how it wanted to begin, selected it's name and officers and was on its way with energy and excitement. The group held a contest to find a suitable and meaningful name. Many names were suggested such as Golden Oldies, Pioneers, Energizers, and other names. The final selection was, of course, The Mineral Springers.

As the group began meeting, the decision was made that we would have a monthly meeting with a program, fellowship, and refreshments. In addition to this meeting, there would be a once a month extra activity, such as trips and eating out . Also, we would strive to do outreach and service projects on a continuing basis. From the beginning these three areas of participation have been carried out with some good success.

The monthly meetings have been very successful with average attendance of 20 - 23 persons. There are 46 on the active roll. We have times of sharing, devotionals, games, contests, good time for just plain visiting, and wonderful refreshments. Eating out is popular and trips to various places

such as The NC Zoo, Spencer Railroad Shop Museum, The Waxhaw Museum, a mountain trip, Lake Tillery and Historic Camden Tour, and other outings.

The group has held several yard sales, along with two church dinners to raise finances for their outreach. One of their major projects to help finance is the Ecuadorian ministry where Roy and Edie Gleason have spent their lives in mission for JAARS. Over a thousand dollars has been sent during the years to this area. One hundred dollar gifts at varying times have gone to UMCOR, Feed The Children, Operation Reachout, and to the Picnic Shelter.

Members of this group, as individuals, participate in many of the church wide activities. These same members are the ones who led the church in past years and who have brought it through the years to what it is today.

Gene Richardson was the first president of the group and he has been succeeded by Donnie McGuirt for the last six or seven years.

This ministry offers a sort of refuge or sanctuary, for it's participants, from the fast paced high energy programs and ministries of our church and provides a very important service to its members, as well as providing outreach projects that can be their own.

Margaret King served as Secretary/Treasurer until 1994 and now she serves as Treasurer with Mercer Smith as our Secretary since then.

The roll shows that, at this time, our active members are:

Bessie Rodgers
Clara McDonald
Bill and Modene Howie
Dewey and Marcene Robinson
Olive Howie
Doris Carpenter
Helen C. Moser
Ray and Marion Ross
Mabel Hancock
Charles and Nonnie Lehneis

Roy and Edie Gleason
Cleo Couick
Mercer Smith
Jr. and Donnie McGuirt
Bud and Clara McManus
David and Frances Helms
Ruth Toglio
Lawrence and Helen Moser
Horace and Carolyn Helms
Ed and Tommie Brockmann

Meg and Gloria Giddings
Myrthe Blythe
Willie McCorkle
Callie and Margaret King
Lonnie and Maxine McGuirt

Doris Hines
Grady and Marilyn McAuley
Russell and Elaine Goodwin
Bobby and Kathy Green

SCOUTING

Scouting programs have long been a part of our churches ministry to the youth. The first Scout Troop was formed in April 1941, by Mr. Earnest Broome and has been in service ever since. Baxter Howie was one of the first leaders of this troop as well as an agriculture teacher whose name has been forgotten.

During these first years (during World War II) the scouts took part in programs aimed at preparing the boys for later participation in the Armed Services. They also collected scrap iron and other metals for the war effort. With the coming of the end of the war, the troop began to experience new opportunities.

Participation in Camporees and Camporalls as well as local camping, field events, hiking, Boards of Review and annual recognition banquets became annual events with advancement in rank following.

Special events, such as three day hiking the Appalachian Trail several times, a trip to Washington, and to Norfolk Naval Yard were part of activities in the early 50's along with the annual weeks stay at the Council Scout Camp, which was then Camp Cabarrus.

In those early years, these kinds of events were the exception, rather than the norm, for everyone involved, since times were just beginning to be good and all the things now available to youth were not available in those days nearly as much.

The old Community Building served for 25 years as the weekly meeting

place for the Troop with no central heat or air conditioning, just as it did for all other of its many activities. In 1971 the Scouts raised \$ 1,000.00 to put on repairs to this building. It was in this building that many basic disciplines and values were brought to bear on the lives of many of our young men and girls, both members and non members of our church. The Scouting program is of valuable assistance to the families.

In 1967, Dana McManus, Mike Goodwin, Wayne King, and Eddy Howie along with Scoutmaster, Bill Howie began a memorable trip when they signed up to go, along with 33 other Union County Scouts, on a three week trip to the National 48,000 acre Scout Ranch at Cimmeron, New Mexico called Philmont.

It was, while they were sleeping on the floor of a gym in Oklahoma, that the call came that a flood had hit the ranch doing enough damage that the time there was canceled. With 16 days left, the leaders made a decision to go to the Grand Canyon and other touring places. While at the canyon, the group hiked down to the bottom and camped for two nights experiencing the awesomeness of that place. From this adventure at the canyon and many other places visited and the events causing the trip to be changed, the National Scout office authorized a special patch to be given to those participating with no other copies ever to be issued. This is very rarely ever done in scouting.

The troop, chartered in the early 40's as Troop #68, was sponsored by our church until 1979 when a separate corporation was formed as sponsor until this day. Charles Bowden carried this program very actively for 12 years. Our church then began sponsoring a new program for Cubs, Webelos, Brownies, Boy and Girl Scouts. It is now Troop #18. Leaders through the years, from the beginning, are listed below as close as records show:

	Scoutmaster	Assistants
1942 - 1947	Baxter Howie	And others not remembered
1947 - 1950	George Rape	Harry Doster (1947) Bill Howie (1951)

1952 - 1955	Bill Howie	Harry Doster
1956 - 1957	Richard Steele	Howard Newell Morrison Couick
1957 - 1962	Howard Newell	Bill Bryant
1963 - 1966	Bill Howie	Mike Smith, Don Robinson David A. Helms
1967 - 1970	Jim Starnes	Don Robinson Charles Bowden
1970 - 1978	Charles Bowden	Eddy Howie, Lonnie McGuirt, David E. Helms
1990 - 1994	John Easton	Ken Turchi, Ken Newell, Pat Easton
1994 - 1995	Ken Turchi	
1995 - present	Daniel Binford	Hank Linker, Al Howell, Keith Newell

In Scouting, there are three areas of achievement for the scouts and leaders. The Order Of The Arrow is an award given in recognition of excellence in overall work as a Scout and/or Leader. Several of our Troop leaders have been recognized with this special award as well as a good number of the Scouts.

Another specialized award is The God and Country Award. This award is given in recognition of over a years concentrated study and work. It recognizes the accomplishments of those who meet weekly for a year in a course of study and then much church and community service time is spent on special projects.

The crowning achievement for the Scouts is the Eagle Award. This high point in a boys scouting work is achieved through a series of rank

advancement. These in order are: Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, 1st Class, Star, Life, then Eagle. As the Scouts advance through these ranks each step gets progressively harder until that day when the Scout is presented his Eagle Scout Badge.

Harry Doster was Troop #68's first Eagle in 1943. Harry passed away while this history was being compiled. Since then some of those who have achieved this rank are: Page Winchester, Bill Bryant, George Rape Jr., Tom Smith, Mike Penegar, Jim Walkup, Hamp Howey, James Griffin, Kevin Ashley, Zan Tyson, Brian Easton, Nathan Binford, Jonathan Yow, Kevin Newell, and Michael Bigham. Each of the Eagle Scouts is required to originate a service project from planning, supervising, financial support, and working the project to its conclusion as one part of his advancement.

Examples of these Eagle projects are: Refurbishing of the Memorial Garden, by Brian Easton; construction of patio and benches in Waxhaw, by Nathan Binford; construction of the church picnic shelter, by Jonathan Yow; and currently building a barbecue pit, by Bradley Fowler.

Our latest scout leaders and some of their programs and accomplishments include: John Easton for the 1990 - 1994 with Ken Turchi, Keith Newell, and Pat Easton, much activity took place these years with three advancing to eagle. During these years the troop participated in many camporees and were consistently winning blue ribbons. Also, Scoutmaster Easton received Scoutmaster of the Year Award. Later, building on these experiences Ken Turchi also won the same award. Ken Turchi took the reins for a year in 1994 - 1995 with good activity.

Then in the first of 1996, Daniel Binford became Scoutmaster and is presently serving in this important role. Continuing in the same spirit of positive and very active leadership, Daniel is leading the troop in a host of activities - participating in many different kinds of trips. One of the high lights of these trips was the one to the Amish Country and on to Philadelphia with all its historical places.

The United Methodist Men are the official sponsors of scouting while a nominal amount of financial support is a part of the Mens program, by far and large the Troops have been almost self supporting.

The scouting program for girls has been organized a few times in the past (before 1990) with varying lengths of time of survival. Records of these times are hard to find, however, to those who served those areas of time appreciation is due. Records show they were active in 1971. Then in 1991, the group was reorganized with the following leaders: Daisy Scouts - Teresa Carey, Brownie Scouts - Susan Yow and Jerri Winkler, Junior Scouts - Paula McKinney and Robin Connelly.

Now in 1997, there are two Brownie troops - (1) Tammy Davis (2) Deane Mabro, there are two Junior troops - (1) Dawn Roberson (2) Cindy Biggers, and there is one Cadet /Senior Troop - Susan Yow and Kim Winchester.

Of the current members three have earned the Silver Award (the highest level in the Cadet level). These have been April Yow, Brenna McKinney, and Lisa Harlow.

Apologies are made to both leaders and girls who were in the Troops before 1991 for not including them in this history.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

One more milestone in our churches history occurred in March 7, 1971. On that Sunday morning 18 men gathered in the fellowship hall for the purpose of forming an official United Methodist Mens Club. Rev. Marsden Kitley was instrumental in our becoming an official chartered Methodist Men Unit - although the men of the church had been meeting for breakfast for a number of years - but only as a local group with no ties to the National group.

From this beginning grew one of the outstanding units in the Albermarle District. At his first meeting the following officers were elected; President - Mike Smith, Vice President - Lawrence Moser, Secretary - Marsden Kitley, Kitchen Coordinator - Wilburn Couick.

Significant to note that at this first meeting \$250.00 was pledged for the construction of a Scout Building - a building which was never built.

One pleasant memory of these first meetings was the fact that Wilburn Couick always brought fresh cooked biscuits to go with the ham, eggs, and grits. The ensuing 26 years have brought many good and positive things to the men - not only to our own members but to others who have been drawn to our fellowship.

During these years and to accomplish our objectives we have experienced many good times and much involvement in the overall ministry of all Christians. A partial list of speakers for our club reveals the names of over 100 persons who have come to us and lead us during the past 10 - 12 years. We feel that this is a record of which we can be justly proud and a record not exceeded by any club anywhere. Among those who have come to lead us are those who represent many different ministries and programs - some of who are listed as follows: Don Wildmon - The National Director of American Family Association, George MacLean - National Director of the Mission Society for United Methodist, The Editor of our Christian Advocate, National Director of "Weekend for Winners", The Executive Director and others from JAARS, Director of National Foundation of Evangelism, The Man who walked across America, all our District Superintendents, Dr. George Hunter from Asbury Seminary, a minister from Africa, The Conference Director of Church Growth, the Conference Director of Ministries, a Cherokee Indian, Melvin Graham (Billy Graham's brother), President of District Methodist Men, Lay Witness Team Coordinators, representatives from Operation Reachout, Prison Ministries, Hospice, Turning Point, Drug/Alcohol Counselors, and a host of others coming to us with powerful testimonies.

In addition to these kinds of speakers we are honored by musicians and occasionally have informative visitors. Through the years our unit has touched the lives of over 100 men and boys and at present our roll has 36 men, with an average of 21 attending the bi-monthly meetings.

While our members have always and are still participating in the fuller life of the church, we also have initiated particular projects sponsored by our club. We initiated our semi-annual Barbecue and sponsored it for two years until the church took it over. During the time of our sponsorship of this

barbecue, we spent the funds raised on church projects and ministries, both local and outreaching efforts, just as our ladies have been doing with their bazaar funds for many years.

Among our specific projects are - the lighted sign up by the road, the large screen video projector, a sound system, a Van cover, room signs, a sump pump, and the road signs. We donate funds annually to the Scouts, Jail Ministry, various JAARS people and projects.

The United Methodist Mens Prayer Line receives our support. This is a 24 hour 800 number set up to pray with people who call in from across America. We have sponsored an extension of this number on two occasions, staffing it and talking with and praying with many persons who called in.

We are the official sponsors of our Scouting programs, with both financial and personal assistance. The Robinson Building renovation was given \$1500.00 for its expenses. Our men have actively worked on an addition to the Prison Fellowship home and offices. Also assisting in work on the Habitat house, one members Hurricane Hugo destroyed home and one of the JAARS peoples residence. Many many hours have been spent working on Operation Reachout's many different facilities through the years. For several years our men staffed the Winter Shelter for a week, staying overnight and serving the 15 to 20 persons their breakfast. This project put our men into direct personal contact with the street people, bringing a clearer more personal understanding and sensitivity to what poverty is really like.

We have served the church several breakfasts after Easter Sunrise Services, two county wide Mens Breakfasts and enjoyed a 25th Anniversary Banquet.

Our club has been recognized as the outstanding club in the Albemarle District and consequently the runner-up to the Annual Conference Outstanding Club Award. Several of our men have attended the several Annual Conference Mens Rallies and the Southeastern Jurisdictional Rallies.

The list of our officers, from the beginning, is as follows: Presidents -

Mike Smith, George Rape, Bill Howie, Gary Sparks, Tom Reynolds, Star Koerner, Charles Fowler, Ray Ross, Gary Lemmonds, John Easton, and Mark Tetlow. Presently our officers for 1997 are: President - Mark Tetlow, Vice President - Barry Morely, Secretary - Grady McAuley, Treasure - Alex Jackson, Program/Projects - Bill Howie, and Meal Coordinator - Dewey Robinson.

Our present membership roll contains the following names: Bill Southerland, Gary Lemmonds, Phil Lemmonds, Mike McKinney, Lawrence Moser, Meg Giddings, Alex Jackson, Mike Connelley, Bo Sexton, John Bishop, Bill Howie, Ray Ross, Dewey Robinson, Lester McGuirt, Lonnie McGuirt, Don Hendershot, John Easton, Roy Gleason, Ed Rowell, Cliff Sifford, Jim Yow, John Case, Jack Peterson, Dennis Fowler, Daniel Binford, Hank Linker, Mike Smith, Grady McAuley, Barry Morely, Eddy Cook, Mark Tetlow, Bud McManus, Mike Phillips, Terry Pressly, and our young attendees Jonathan Yow, William Southerland, Paul Southerland, Drew Bishop and other sons of our members.

We are proud to say that a song about our club has been composed and we use it occasionally. It is to the tune "We Will Understand It Better Bye and Bye". Here are the Words:

Some folks say - all we do is eat,
Grits - eggs - sausage -- something sweet,
We've become famous for our cooks,
And you won't find our specialties in any cookbook.

CHORUS Bye and Bye when Sunday morning comes,
All our Men are gathered in this room.
We will pray and learn the role we must assume,
And we'll understand it better bye and bye!

Some say it's early - why do we come?
We could be sleepin' and restin' some!
Just ask anyone and they will surely say,
Sunday morning breakfast really makes the day!

We have great experiences - like brothers we are,
People come to lead from near and far,
We love to lift our voices in rousing song,
Churches with Methodist Men - can't go wrong!

Our pastors through the years have been very active and supportive including our present one Jim Yow. Here in 1997 we are still very actively persuing the goals of United Methodist Men. We meet at 7:30 am the first and third Sundays year around, and have just added two ministries to our financial support list after one churches month long promotion of World Hunger. These are "Feed The Children" and UMCOR, two missions feeding the hungry. We are truly experiencing Gods Grace and Rejoicing in Christian services and witness.

As we close our report on the history of our club, we pause to honor the names of our members who have, as our Conference Secretary always notes - passed from the "Church Militant to the Church Triumphant".

We list them here in fond remembrance and honor.

David Andrews	Tommy Laney
Worth Carpenter	Bill Meier
Harold Carter	Olin Murray
George Coan	Ed Morrow
Frank Godfrey	George Rape
Craig Harry	Gene Richardson
Grover Helms	Allen Robinson
FrankHoltzclaw	JerryRodgers
Jack Horton	Howard Stuart
Star Koerner	John Underwood
Rick King	Page Winchester

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The first group of Methodist Women was organized in 1869 in the Tremont Methodist Church of Boston. Eight women's home and/or

Missionary Societies were organized between 1868 and 1893 in the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

From that small beginning in 1869 the groups, now known as United Methodist Women have had phenomenal growth until today with 40,860 members in the Western North Carolina Conference alone. (There are 68 Conferences in United Methodism.)

These groups are proclaiming Christ in witness and missionary outreach throughout the world, building upon their yesterday and committed for mission tomorrow.

In Mineral Springs Methodist Church, the missionary outreach started as early as 1915 when Rev. W. F. Sanford's report to the Quarterly Conference contained the following:

Ladies Aid Society Report for Mineral Springs - Members - nine Total made 1915-16 was \$ 23.24 By (Miss) Bertha Thompson, Secretary and (Mrs.) H. A. Helms, President

The records show no further mention of Ladies Aid Society until minutes of May 1921 as follows:

On May 27, 1921, the ladies of Mineral Springs Methodist Church met at the home of Miss Effie Alexander and Mrs. Annie Lee Coan for the purpose of organizing a society which was called "The Social Worker" consisting of 16 members. The name of the group was later changed to "The Ladies Aid Society"). The purpose of this group was stated "to help the Church". The group met monthly in private homes and considered such business as to approve the purchase of "Skiddo" in the amount of 15 cents (this was furniture polish) and paying the monthly light bill in the amount of \$ 1.00 as well as appointing different members to clean the church and the ground. They also kept the cemetery in good condition, made regular contributions to "Foreign Missions" and to the Children's Home.

The youth of the community helped with their programs. One set of minutes showed that a program of songs was given by Helen Coan, Merle Deal, and Clara Howie, accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Houston Howie

and that Willie Gordon Moser and Doris Laney served the refreshments. A picture of this group shows the ladies holding up articles of clothing apparently made by them to be given to World War I soldiers, as one of the ladies is dressed as a Red Cross Nurse. This must have been a service project of this group.

At a later date the unification of three branches of the Methodist Church was adopted in Kansas City, MO. The Womens Missionary organization of the Methodist Protestant, The Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Episcopal South into one group known as the Women's Society of Christian Service (the WSCS). Then on October 1, 1940 the WSCS was born in our local church. Mrs. L. B. Doster was elected President of this organization. As we usually do, this organization of women did a lot for our church. They helped when our new sanctuary was furnished (after the old wooden church burned). They bought the Pulpit furniture (which we still use), furnished the carpet and paid for eight pews. When the old Parsonage was built, this group furnished two bedrooms and the kitchen.

In the old education building, they bought quite a few of the chairs, dishes, pots, and pans as well as the table in the kitchen.

They did much for foreign mission and local missions such as; ditty bags to soldiers in Viet Nam, Christmas packages for our boys in service, helped buy chairs, dishes, pots, and pans for the local fire department. To finance these projects they held auction sales, hat sales, box suppers, bake sales, tooth brush sale, sold flavoring, danny dozzits, and kitchen knives, and many suppers in the old community building.

In 1948 our Wesleyan Service Guild was organized with Mrs. David Helms as President. Mrs. Viola Doster continued as President of the WSCS. Each of these groups had their own program of fund raisers, local and foreign mission.

In 1973 all women of the Mineral Springs Church Circles were reorganized into United Methodist Women with Cleo Couick as President. Our circles were divided into three groups: The Friendship Group, The Fidelis Group, and The Agape Group. In December 1975, the Friendship

Group was disbanded. The Fidelis Group and the Agape Group worked together in our church and community serving meals and visiting the sick and bereaved. A prayer line was established study courses each year, helped with meals at two youth camps, sponsored a retired missionary, helped with Bible Schools, sponsored breakfast, bazaar, and yard sale each fall.

We now sale cookbooks, sweatshirts, stationary, knives, flavoring, and danny dozzit (scouring pads) to cover current expenses. Our large events are fall breakfast and bazaar, poinsettia sale (which are placed in the church at Christmas). The Agape Group was very active until 1973 until sometime in 1993-94 when they disbanded. During this time the Agape Group published a cookbook, handled the poinsettia sale at Christmas, built a playground for the children, sold sweatshirts, and stationary, paid on the copier for the church office, and on the new parsonage.

Sometime in 1994 a new group was formed known as Deborah's Faithful who have been very active making donations to organization such as Red Cross, Turning Point, Wolfe Developmental Center, Girl Scouts, Operation Reachout (a local mission), and made up back packs with school supplies for local schools.

Today we have two very active groups of United Methodist Women with a total membership of 49. Ann Wlodkowski is our United Methodist Women President. Diane White is Chairperson of the Fidelis Group and Teresa Carey is Chairperson of Deborah's Faithful. Our United Methodist Women have continued to help financially with the operation and new construction in our church such as: Construction of a storage building , widening of the church walkways, storm drains, copy machines, and maintenance contract, the communion table in memory of deceased member, lectern in memory of deceased member, donation on church van, donation for construction of new parsonage, stove and refrigerator for parsonage, other furnishings for parsonage, donation to Children's Home, painting of sanctuary, church flag, tables and glasses for Christian Life Center, chairs for new part of Education Building, two vacuum cleaners, donation to repair roof, donation on picnic shelter, chair and table for library.

We make annual donations to local organizations such as: Boy Scouts, Habitat, HELP, PLUS, Wolfe Developmental Center, Children's Home,

Arc, and Turning Point.

We give two mission recognition pins each year to deserving members of our group, or other members of the church. We participate in five areas of undesignated giving. We honor infants at their baptism with a donation to missions. Also, we sponsor a Mother-Daughter Banquet each year.

We are a disverse membership, our lifestyles, ages, education, interests, occupation, experiences, and perspectives differ greatly, and yet we are one, united by a common direction and a common purpose. We are a community of women whose purpose is to know God and experience freedom as persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission. We are in mission both in the community and around the world.

OPERATION REACHOUT

In August of 1979, the Mission Committee, led by Modene Howie, stepped out in faith to expand its local mission outreach. The placing of a small collection building adjacent to the county garbage dumpster in the community and the cleaning out of the community building for storage and distribution, brought what was first called "The Sharing Station" into being.

From this humble and simple beginning, in 1979, emerged a mission outreach which today touches all of Union County and which has become the largest single non tax supported agency of its kind in the county. Our involvement in local missions, in the past, had been confined to Christmas help of all kinds and help on a local emergency basis. The initial step in this new look at local needs involved the year round collection of clothing and household items, setting up displays in the club house and inviting families to come in and be matched up with their needs.

Originally, this was done each Saturday and for other times of special needs. The collection and distribution of furniture soon thereafter became a part, too.

During these formative years, no supporting funds were asked for from the church - only the use of the abandoned club house which had no power, heat or cooling. Under steadfast and dedicated leadership and with a small group of volunteers, this mission began to take on growth in the proportions which soon led to the vision that it could indeed be of significant assistance to more and more of our counties needy. It also began to reveal just how widespread the needs of many were. The first years were hard and called for perseverance on the part of this small group.

Working with discarded items of clothing and furniture gathered from the dumpster and from direct donations - in summer heat and winters cold, the lack of power and heat could have proven discouraging to the point of giving up. Added to these discomforts was the obvious fact that a large part of the membership gave verbal assent to the mission and cooperated somewhat, while not being whole heartedly involved year round in it's activities. In fact, the mission itself was actually opposed by some to some extent. The feeling was that this mission should not be located on our church grounds. Yet, in spite of these hurdles to overcome, overcome indeed this small group did and moved forward gaining more support month by month and year by year.

Church involvement, from a financial standpoint and volunteers, has steadily grown through the years as more people realized that indeed there are ever growing needs out there and that among Christ's teachings helping those in need is basic to Christian witness.

For six years, the mission continued to be housed in the old club house while greatly expanding its outreach and service. As the reputation spread, more and more donations of articles came in from all across the county. This situation gave the vision that more could be done for more people than were coming for help. Agencies such as, Salvation Army, Goodwill, The Rag Man, and the various homes for special ministries began to receive surplus. This overflow brought about the next expansion.

A store was set up, at Houston, in 1981 to provide a place where people could shop for needed items at prices of \$.50 to \$2.00 with the proceeds going into "The Sharing Station" fund to help people with medical bills, heating oil, prescriptions, rent and other expenses they were not able to pay. In those early years, this store provided over \$10,000.00 per year to be used in this fund.

This old building has served for 16 years, despite its looks and despite its having had a collision with a large truck coming halfway into it.

About this time, our program won WSOC TV's "Nine Who Care Award", an annual award given to such programs in Channel Nine's viewing area. In the same year, Modene Howie, won the individuals award.

The success of this store, at Houston, brought about the opening of a second store in Monroe, in 1985. While the Houston store kept it's name - "The Sharing Station" - the one in Monroe was named "Finders Keepers". At the writing of this report, in 1997, these two stores, operated by volunteers, Norma Plattenburg and Marion Ross are averaging \$2800.00 a month being produced for the total ministry.

Our church began to experience a potential for growth in the early and mid eighties. These projections and visions for expanded ministries resulted in the need for more space. The old community building would have to come down. This situation called for a decision to be made concerning the "Sharing Station" future. By this time, a majority of our people were convinced to build a building that would, for a time, house the ministry - therefore today we have the Robinson Building. Funds for this building came from the Raymond Robinson Memorial Fund and The "Sharing Station" Fund.

The following report written by Modene Howie, in 1984, the chair of the missions committee, was written to the church as a result of the decision to tear the community building down. A decision which mandated that other plans be made for housing the "Sharing Station".

"In August of 1979, the Mission Commission of Mineral Springs United Methodist Church stepped out in faith to expand the local mission of our church. Through the building and placement of a collection house and the cleaning out and utilizing of the vacant, building known as the "Club House" as warehouse and distribution space, the "Sharing Station" has come into being.

It has not been easy of course. The hours spent in all phases of the

development to this point could not be counted. There have been so many of our members who give hours and days every week, continuously, without hesitation or complaint. God bless them every one. Working in an open building for two full winters and part of another with no heat has been quite a struggle for the volunteers.

The result has been worth the discomfort of cold in winter and heat in summer. This year alone, already 91 families have been helped with crisis situations because the Sharing Station was financially able to pay medical bills, fuel, power bills, rent and provide other essentials to survival. This does not include the hundreds of families who have directly received food, clothing and household items, plus the indirect families who have been helped by other agencies which we have provided with clothing and household items.

We realize that the appearance of the community building is not nearly as important as the use it is put to. I am absolutely, positively sure that the Lord blesses that old white building every day. It has supported tons and tons of weight without a creak or a sag, and never leaked a drop. We are so thankful for it. If only each of you could have a first hand contact with the people who have benefited from the old buildings resurrection then you would bless it too. It may look bad on the outside, but on the inside it looks like faith, hope, and love. MUCH MUCH LOVE. As with people...its what's on the inside that counts.

We hope that this church will continue, accelerate, and expand its mission programs in the years to come, ever keeping in mind that our first mission is to reach the lost, and to preach the word."

The new facility served well and the reputation continued to grow and the ministry to expand. After several years, a decision was made that, with the ever increasing service provided, a central location in Monroe would serve better.

Therefore, in 1986, a new venture began. As was the case at our church, getting set up and housed proved to be very challenging. Available spaces often required much clean up and renovation just to make them habitable. However, volunteers accepted the challenge each time there was a move and

made the spaces workable. People from other churches had begun to be involved by this time. For the next two years the moves, five in all, saw continued growth and continued need for a permanent space.

From the inception, in 1979, until 1987 our church was the initiator and sole sponsor under the direction of Modene Howie and a good number of volunteers from our church and others.

Then in 1987, Modene Howie met Rev. James Sessoms who already was also working the same kind of ministry. The two decided that to work together would accomplish more than working separately. From that time the joint ministry would be known as "Operation Reachout".

Our church was still the main sponsor with volunteers coming from our church as well as other communities. For a time this group operated in rented spaces - none of which proved to be big enough to accommodate the growth. A building, on Miller street, became available, for sale. The tax evaluation on this property was set at \$103,000.00, however through some prayerful negotiations it was obtained for \$62,000.00. A down payment of \$10,000.00 included the \$8,000.00 rebate from our church which was a repayment of the "Sharing Station" original loan to get the Robinson Building paid for. This property consisted of a six room house, a commercial building and a carport. With this acquisition of a place to call its own, Operation Reachout began to expand still further into serving still yet additional needs. In addition to help with food, clothing, furniture, and financial help, GED courses were begun, Bibles and tract giveaways begun, family and financial counseling begun.

SOMETHING NEW

Through the years the food distribution had been accomplished by; case by case emergency situations with a growing list of families assisted every month. The recognition of a desperate need, among what might be called 'The Working Poor'; for food assistance brought about a division of the method of distribution. Still maintaining the much needed emergency help to those who had nothing - a new division of Reachout was formed.

Thus - Joseph's Storehouse was brought into reality. This ministry carefully screens its clients and serves those households who have income of less than \$200.00 a week. Each one can come to the storehouse and shop the shelves for their special needs. A donation, if they have it, is asked of \$.20 a pound. This amount helps cover utilities on the building.

This new ministry leased space, since there was no room in the Miller Street facility. For about two years the storehouse rented space and in 1996 a new facility was built for it and is now owned by Reachout.

The success of Joseph's Storehouse lay in the fact that all of the supermarkets were ordered to throw away, every three days, their off the shelf perishable foods. This was recognized by our leaders and through negotiations with the District Offices of these stores a program of keeping these items and the storehouse picking them up was initiated.

Volunteers now make a total of 42 trips a week to 14 different supermarkets and pizza parlors picking up, and therefore saving, over 8,000 pounds of food each and every week. In addition to the regular trips to pick up, four additional sources supply on an intermittent schedule thousands of pounds of food. These sources are Wal-Mart, Harris Teeter Distribution Center, Linens and Things (weekly), and an Auction house. The total of both the regular weekly visits to the supermarkets and these additional sources will exceed 10,000 lbs. weekly handled for distribution. The food is put out on display four days a week. After each of these days, the surplus of this perishable food is distributed to organizations such as Turning Point, The Halfway House, Elderly Apartments, Overnight Shelter, etc. Making nine in all.

Joseph's Storehouse Report - A Part of Operation Reachout
A Part of Our Ministry

OVER 40,000 LBS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED EVERY MONTH

These are the families that our perishable food distribution touches each week.

	<u>Families</u>
Elderly Housing Sites	
Cotton St. Bragg St. Gatewood Village	150 approximately
Meals on Wheels	30
Morton and Assoc.	5-10
Icemorlee Apartments	20 selected
Turning Point	8-10
Friendship Home	5-10
Joseph's Storehouse	150-180
JAARS Center	400
Operation Reachout	40-50
Bag Lunch Program	80-100
New Testament Day Care for elderly	25
Schools and Churches	Not able to determine
Metrolina Food Bank	Not able to determine
We have just added Hospice	Not able to determine

In some way - each week - and each day, we know that this program makes life easier for almost 1000 families. For some families involved, it means eating versus not eating. We utilize more than 30 volunteers who give over 300 hours (each week) to this program. They give their vehicles, their gas, and their precious time.

In time, a lunch program for the 'street people' was started as well as seasonal drives to give fans to the elderly and jackets and school supplies to children.

Operation Blessing gave 700 blankets for Reachout - needs and local commercial and industrial operations began to donate materials. Volunteers from our church and from the JAARS Center added over 1,000 square feet more storage space on this new site.

SOMETHING NEW HAS BEEN ADDED

Realizing that there are many persons subject to the horrible consequences of alcohol and other drugs, Operation Reachout has leased a facility where these persons can get housing, counseling, and job placement while they are completing their transition back to a normal life.

Each person must attend Bible study and counseling, must give some time to helping others, must begin to job hunt, and when employed then pay a small rent until they are able to get out on their own. Presently, there are six men housed in this facility. There is room for a total of fifteen.

A REVIEW OF OPERATION REACHOUTS TOTAL MINISTRY

Since 1987, when the "Sharing Station" was merged with a ministry of Rev. James Sessoms, and renamed Operation Reachout, some of the accomplishments have been as follows:

- An emergency food pantry, clothing closet, household items for those who have this kind of need

- A second food ministry "Joseph's Storehouse" for those who have income of less than \$200.00 a week. This part of the ministry distributes over 40,000 lbs. of food a month

-Since 1989 a back to school program furnishing book bags and school supplies

-Initiated 'The Lord of The Harvest' a program feeding over 300 on Thanksgiving Day a free meal

-Financial assistance to needy people in excess of \$63,000.00

-Purchased Reachout's permanent home and built Joseph's Storehouse

-In 1997 are feeding 125 children a day a free lunch

-Operate two outlet stores for fund raisers - these stores are presenting producing \$2800.00 a month for the ministries services

-Opened a 15 bed facility for men who want to change their lives from one of addiction to one of Christ centered living. This is known as The Virtues Program

-Over 300 free lunches per month being served to the 'street people' and those who need one - this is accompanied with a mandatory Bible study

-Have purchased a 5-1/2 acre tract off Roosevelt Blvd. for future family oriented activity center

Many persons have given help over the years in volunteering their time on a one time or an ongoing basis and donating much in the material way. To recognize all of those would be an impossible task but much appreciation is in order for these wonderful people. What can be reported as a representation of those persons is a report of those helping on a weekly year round basis.

We thank Modene Howie, Ruth Toglio, Mabel Hancock, Marion and Ray Ross, Earl Propst, Diane White, Frances Helms, Ann Wlodkowski, Susan Howie, Karen and Todd Clark, Gloria Giddings, Roy Gleason, Denise Moser, and Bill Howie. Also, to Roger and Teresa Carey Ford for heading up and working in our local church Christmas time extra ministry.

In including a rather extensive report in this, the history of our church, it is the hope that more of our younger members will become aware of the ministries meaning and will take part in its work. It is truly an outreach of our church and is worthy of continuing active support and participation in the years to come.

In closing this report let us be reminded of Jesus' direct quote "I was hungry--and you fed me--come inherit the kingdom" "I was hungry--and you fed me not--Go away from me I never knew you".

OUR GROWING MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mineral Springs Church has grown by leaps and bounds in its ministry to youth and children during the past few years.

In 1991, there were over 60 children and 20 youth involved in programs! Patti Goodwin served as Children's Coordinator with Becky Geddings following her in September of that year. Leslie Tucker led a "parents morning out" program for nine children and there were four children's choirs! Beginning that year, the church moved to a paid nursery position on Sunday mornings to help with growing numbers of children! Gina Roberts served as Youth Coordinator with Allison Helms assisting. Service projects were a main thrust that year.

In 1992, it proved to be an exciting year. Becky, with help from Susan Yow, coordinated these ministries. New Sunday School classes were started for two and three year olds and sixth graders! Children's Church for three and four year olds was a strong ministry. Shirley Steele followed Tessa Tetlow as the paid nursery attendant. Youth ministries also continued to grow with Donna Harrington as coordinator.

Growing numbers of children in 1993 made dividing Sunday School classes a necessity! Both 2nd and 3rd graders and 4th and 5th graders were divided! Important to both children and youth was the arrival of Peggy Bridgers as Youth Director in August of 1993. During that year there were 45 youth on the mailing list!! Approximately 25-30 of those were regular

UMY attendees! Six counselors helped to make this ministry possible.

Youth ministries came to the forefront in 1994 by welcoming Mark Carnes as the Youth Director in October of that year. Mark helped to stabilize the growth of youth and adult leadership experienced in 1993. Both children and youth benefited from the move into the new Education building providing more classroom space for all ages!

In 1995, Jerrie Winkler assumed responsibilities for the Children's programs and Margaret Worley became Youth coordinator. Ministries continued to flourish!

By 1996, numbers of children had increased to well over 70 and youth to almost 40 on roll! In fact, records indicate that as many as 100-150 children attended Sunday School with 10-20 teachers involved! Cathy Burrill assumed youth leadership responsibilities and reported 36 in attendance on the average at UMYF! Junior Highs on Sunday mornings were taught by Anne King with Christa Cook leading grades 9-12.

Staff-Parish determined in 1997 to provide a stronger foundation to the continued growth in children and youth programs, it would be necessary to add the first full-time Christian Educator to the church staff. Marilyn Wooten came on board in April of this year and is working to create a larger community of adults who will continue the already established ministries for both children and youth. In September, the Children's Council began a new Weekday Children's Ministry which has now grown to 23 children, four teachers and a director. Plans for a new pre-school playground are underway. All age level ministries continue to be a blessing to all those involved!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

As the first part of this book carries a good amount of the history of Sunday School in the early pre World War II years and as the memories section brings out some interesting facts about the early Sunday School, this section will deal mostly with the later years.

As with the 1950's baby boom brought about increased activities in other children's area so Sunday School began to grow and offer strong leadership to them also. Efforts were made to secure strong dedicated teachers and to divide the age groups more suitably. As these 50's babies grew into the 60's the rolls and attendance increased and the Junior and Senior High groups became much more active.



Our Children around 1957

These groups were the first ones to feel so much less need to help with family farms and so had a little more time for outside activity, therefore these first groups were taken into MYF, Scouts, and the Youth choirs, and of course Sunday School was just one more of their involvement's.

Sunday School attendance reached a peak in the mid 60's and was going strong in those years with sound curriculum and dedicated leaders. As these post war baby boomers moved into college and marriage years the attendance began to drop as these young people went to college or moved away. There was absolutely no growth from new families moving in.

By the mid 70's the attendance had reached what was probably an all time low as was the case in the General Methodist Church. The General Methodist Church level, Sunday School attendance is now 1/2 of what it was in the 1950's.

Those few years were a testing ground for us - we could either let ourselves die or we could do something about our situation. It was then, that we began to see that we could indeed grow and not die 'on the vine' as some others around us were to do as evidenced today.

The story of our resurgence from a dying church to one of energetic moves to survive is told in several other sections of our story. Suffice it to say we pulled ourselves up by "our own boot straps" including in the Sunday School, as can be seen in the attendance charts included elsewhere.

The growth was slow at first but by the mid 80's it was beginning to accelerate at a faster rate. Again we mention here that we had adopted an "Intention to Grow" which gave us the foundation to work from. Some other Methodist Churches in the area had not adopted this attitude.

The attendance in Sunday School about doubled in the 10 years preceding 1997. More children and youth classes, new buildings, and a diversity of types of offerings for adults all came about during these years.

The value of consecrated Christian adults laboring week after week, year after year, in the ministry of Sunday School cannot be measured in human terms. For it is there in those Sunday School rooms where the knowledge of the Bible is imparted, to each generation in turn.

Worship, Missions, Stewardship, Music all have their rightful place in the overall structure of a church. There is nothing promoted by a church that can take the place of Christians passing on to other searchers the everlasting truths and instructions of God's Word. To list all who have led classes through the years would be impossible and to list the ones who have meant much, to many of our members would be unfair to the ones left out. Each of you who read this and have been Sunday School Teachers will know in your hearts how much you have given so that others might learn more about Christ and move closer to Him and as a salute, we give you this testimony.

The influence of the Great Teacher is felt with power in our lives today because there have been those in the church who have been willing to teach us. So it has been with each generation. Christ's learners became the teachers who in turn taught learners who came after them. If there should

ever be a generation of persons who do not know the way, have not experienced the love, do not understand the truth, or have not entered into the life that Christ has offered to all, it will only be because somewhere, sometime, a generation of Christians did not continue to teach. The future of the church depends on you and others like you who have been given responsibility for the Christian education of children, youth, and adults.



Teachers Appreciation 1985

Front Row: Worth Carpenter, Louise Fowler, Cleo Couick, Viola Doster,
Helen Polk Moser, Bill Meier

Back Row: Doris Carpenter, Olin Murray, John Hancock, Rev. Glenn Myers
Frank Godfrey, Henry Blythe

OUR CEMETERIES

Among the several links to our history and our heritage are the cemeteries with their silent markers reminding us of those who've gone before and who await their day of resurrection.

There are three local church cemeteries which are the resting places of many of those who have preceded us and which have direct connections to our history. These three are McWhorters, Pleasant Grove, and Mineral Springs.

A visit and a walk through at McWhorters will reveal several family names familiar to our own member families. The oldest marked grave is 1822 there, however this plot contains many sites marked only with a rock and no names and local tradition has it that some of those would date back to the late 1700's. Since 1787 is recorded as there being a Meeting House there it is likely some graves date back toward that date.

Pleasant Grove cemetery contains many names of our families with the oldest known grave marked in 1842, with the same situation existing around some unmarked sites as at McWhorters. As there was a church there as early as 1832.

As Mineral Springs, attendees still were members of Pleasant Grove until 1911 our first markers indicate 1915 as the first usage of our own cemetery here at Mineral Springs. Numbers of our people today choose Lakeland Park in Monroe as the final resting place of their family members. A fairly complete listing of those buried at the three church connected cemeteries reveal such family related names as:

Adams	Gibson	Irby	Osborne	Smith
Broome	Godfrey	King	Penegar	Stevenson
Carter	Gordon	Laney	Pittman	Tyson
Chapman	Griffin	Long	Polk	Winchester
Coan	Helms	Martin	Roberts	Wolfe
Doster	Horton	McDonald	Robinson	
Eubanks	Howey	McElmore	Rodgers	
Evatt	Howie	Moser	Rorie	

There is another site which plays a part in our history, not to be overlooked. This is located one mile north of the railroad off Potters Road and is the resting place of a number of slaves of some of our member related families.

Prior to the Civil War, these persons were full members of the Pleasant Grove Church and took part in it's services. A walk through these places with their monuments, marked and unmarked, gives a present day visitor a sense of a connection with the past no other place can adequately do. For it

is those who rest here who have given us today so rich a heritage.

How wonderful it would be to call back all their memories. What a rich treasury of the past 200 years could be preserved - memories that have been lost forever.

PART III

MEMORIES

MINERAL SPRINGS - A MAGIC NAME FOR ME!

- My first appointment in the Western NC Conference. Their first “full-time” pastor.

- The first service and sermon: “In the Beginning - God”.

- The comment made by Mrs. Winchester, “Why, he’s just a boy!”

- My bachelor’s quarters with the Vaid Helm’s, which was then the post-office.

- My first encounter with Modene Howie who asked, “What are you doing Saturday night?”, which I thought would be my first date and turned out to be an invitation to supper with several young adult married couples. What a wonderful time we had through the years!

- My first infant Baptism - I will never forget the expression on Tom Laney’s Jr.’s face as I almost dropped his baby daughter.

- walking across the street to lunches in the school cafeteria. Coaching the boy’s high school basketball team one year in which Bobby Richardson scored over a hundred points in a game.

- Coming back from my honeymoon to lead a Wednesday evening Prayer Service, only to find afterwards my car wired for an explosion.

- The building of the first parsonage with Tom Laney, Jr. as Chairman of the committee. Back then they were trying to save money, which didn’t turn out to be such a good idea.

- The birth of our first child, Joy - Christmas 1952 - she was and still is “a joy”.

- After four years, the last service, the sermon, “The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ Be With You All!” In the middle of the sermon retiring to the upstairs restroom for a good cry, before I could stumble through the rest of the service.

MINERAL SPRINGS - A magic place for me, not without it’s ups and downs, but a church - a place - a people, dear to my heart - then - now - and forever.

Dave Charlton
1950 - 1954

Dear Mineral Springs United Methodist Church:

I was glad about Heritage Sunday at Mineral Springs United Methodist Church. As you know, Mineral Springs was my first full time appointment. I have moved on and have served seven other appointments since then.

Mineral Springs has grown since those days. I am proud of the people of the church because they are the ones that make a church grow. You have a great leader in your minister, James Yow. Working together, you can grow more and at the same time be a great church for our Heavenly Father.

Good luck in the future and I will watch your work for the Kingdom with pride.

Yours in Christ,

Earl A Cook

A Brief Account of the Years 1963-1966 from the point of view of the
Pastor July 24, 1995

Leslie, Kent III, Robert, Julia and I arrived in Mineral Springs in June of 1963 on moving day for the Annual Conference. We were full of excitement for all five of us as we left the mountains and headed for our new appointment. We drove in from Monroe in the heat to see our van parked under the trees. Julia was just an infant of a few months and the boys were barely babies themselves. Dess Todd lived just up the street across from George and Helen Rape's store. She invited me on one Saturday morning for breakfast, just after we arrived, where she filled me in with all the lore of the church. In three hours, I knew all about everybody.

One of those that I shall never forget was Raymond Robinson who sat in his personal chair in Sunday School and dressed in the finest fashions of Tate-Brown in Charlotte. He came by occasionally to take me with him to Charlotte to look at those clothes at Tate-Brown that I could only imagine on my salary.

George and Helen Rape were always there in their store with the welcome of a cold Coca-Cola at any time in the hot summers there. One time Julia, when she was merely a toddler, ran to the store when no one was looking across that dangerous highway, to get her one of those cold drinks. We were terrified.

An unforgettable pair were Archie and Lois Tyson who loved us, too. They were strong in their support of us then. And in the ensuing years, they would call us every Christmas Eve just after midnight after we had put Santa Claus under the tree and the children were asleep. We grieved at Lois' untimely death.

Olin Murray was another great friend with that strong look in his eyes that assured me of his support not only for me but for the church as well. He and Mrs. Murray would come to see us in later years for which we were grateful.

We will always recall Leona Howie, that demure and proper lady. I can see her and Olive now in their pew down front just to the left of the pulpit. Olive was Kent's first grade teacher who kept up with him ever since. Leona's brother, Hubert Helms, was always there as a friend.

Of course, we will always treasure Callie and Margaret King along with Teresa Dover, their daughter. They too followed us down the years and to the various places we were sent. Teresa is an artist whose temperament I find quite congenial.

Ethel Helms took care of her sister, Bertha, until Bertha died. She lived on just her Social Security, but paid to the church every Sunday her widow's mite. The time came when she needed to enter the Methodist Home in Charlotte where one usually expects entrants to be well-heeled. They wrote to me that she had applied and I wrote, as did all her other pastors, that she should be entitled if anybody was. They accepted her and she lived out her life there. I was visiting her home the afternoon that John F. Kennedy was killed in Dallas. I rushed home to tell the news and to spend the next four days transfixed before the TV watching that terrible event.

I shall never forget the Fire Department. We had to go on a call one time in

the dead of night and I was driving the big pumper. No sooner were we beyond the lights of town than the electrical system failed and I was pitched into total darkness.

Those three years were, in retrospect, one of the most valuable pastorates of my career. There were the god and Country Scouts, the Youth Choirs with Modene Howie and Clifford Blythe directing, and the dedication of the Educational Building. Thomas Haywood saw that we owed only \$3200 and that if thirty-two would put in \$100 each, we could pay it off and dedicate it. And so we did.

Speaking of that building, Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Jr., was scheduled to dedicate it one Sunday morning soon after. Just as he was about to arrive from Charlotte, a call came that there was a snake in the children's sandbox. I ran across the yard, in my robes, to find a large black snake where the children usually played. I took a hoe and killed the snake and raced back across the yard just as the bishop arrived. There is a picture somewhere that shows all of us looking cool and collected.

All of us Outlaws look back on those years with great warmth and love for all of you. In the years since, a great many of those saints have gone on and when we come back to visit, we can see them yet in their pews and special places.

It is with deep appreciation and satisfaction that we were allowed to share in the lives of so many unique and wonderful people. Thank all of you very much.

Very sincerely,

J. Kent Outlaw, Jr.

Dear Mineral Springs United Methodist Church:

For Heritage Sunday - A look of the history of Mineral Springs United

Methodist Church through the eyes of a minister's personal recollections.

Things I remember.....

1. How hard it was to make our weekly budget need of \$300.00. The last Sunday of the year we had to go from house to house to collect our Conference Apportionments.

2. How the church grew - began a UMMen program - built the old kitchen in the fellowship building. Had many wonderful meals there. Recall one chicken dinner preparation when Kathleen Horton ran out of water. Discovered that our neighbors had siphoned off our water. Repaired it and went on to have another successful meal. Installed the chime system with \$5.00 from Dora Godfrey's "sugar bowl". This enhanced the community. Scouting program was one of the best. The picture of that group of boys who completed a tough two year God and Country course hung in my study ever since and will hang in my new home. It was one of the best groups of youth I ever worked with. Zan Tyson mentioned this group at my retirement service. This course was recognized by the National Scouting office. Charlie Bowden did a great job with these boys. Even though Charlie took the boys for weekend camps he always had them in church on Sundays. These boys really earned their awards.

3. Music program - How hard Modene, Isabel, and Marcene and all of us worked to make our music one of the best. Each Sunday night we would practice in our groups. Modene convinced us that we could sing whether we could or not. What fun we had getting ready for our annual Sing-A-Rama at the High School. (On my first Sunday at Mineral Springs just before service was to begin Modene came into my office to ask if it was alright for the choir to do something and I didn't want to upset a new church member, said OK. She took over the service and welcomed Julia, Ralph and I in a grand way. The choir sang this is a new family and had every one come to shake our hands. Then it was about time to go home and I had to make a decision to preach or not to preach....Guess what? You had to endure extra HOURS. Ha!)

4. Sunday School - Teaching the older ladies the 6th grade literature for a quarter. In addition to stemming the tide against Methodist literature I grew very fond to these “girls”, even to this day. Julia taught Ralph one year as her only student. But we were having an increase in the Nursery department. It seems that when we came to town everybody became pregnant. It was in the water. Ha!

5. Mowing - Remember Ware Penegar and Archie Tyson taking Barry around their mowers along with Jack Horton. How he loved those rides. When we were at the Horton’s Barry would always head for the mower.

6. Those camp meetings with the Good meals would make you glad you came.

7. Recall our last Sunday when George Rape, Our Board Chairman presented Julia and I with a silver tea service. This represented more than just a parting gift. It was representative of the love we have for each other. When I arrived on the scene George was bewildered why “this Yankee was too good to live in our parsonage”. He investigated and said to Helen I wouldn’t either.” And from that time forward a special spirit of true brotherhood developed amongst the folks of Mineral Springs which lives to this day.

8. Our first days as a result were spent with Clara Smith who kept a fish in her freezer for a long time for Ralph to gaze upon.

9. Mineral Springs Elementary School was in the community. Mr. McCain came looking for a teacher at the parsonage and found one in Julia who taught while we were there except the half a year when she was out with Barry. Bill Howie was School Board Chairman who had a rough time during the Intergration period. Julia taught at the old school house with Marcene Robinson, Mary Ann Price whose daughter could hold her own with Ralph. And also Lynn Robinson worked there along with Helen Polk Moser who taught the 5th grade.

10. My first Acolytes were Zan Tyson and Hal Rape. I also have stories on them for they loved to play tricks on me.

11. I could mention many more for you each hold a special place in my heart and always will.

Hope you all have a great day.

Julia and Marsden Kitley
Our love to you all

Dear Mineral Springs United Methodist Church:

I understand that you are in the midst of celebrating the "Christian Heritage." As a part of "The Christian Heritage", YOU, the congregation of Mineral Springs, have had a part in passing on the Christian Faith.

I am proud to have been your pastor for two years, 1981 - 83. When I think of my stay at Mineral Springs, I think of a Church that believed in Missions. The Hungry BBQ that Mineral Springs participated in was a highlight of being at Mineral Springs. Your association with JAARS helped me see a side of Missions that I had not experienced before. And of course, who can ever forget the Sharing Station and thrift shops in Houston, Marshville, and Monroe. God has worked a mighty work through the Christians at Mineral Springs United Methodist Church. I will never forget Mineral Springs receiving the "Nine Who Care Award." What an honor to a Church that cares.

Another of my memories is Vacation Bible School. The parade from the Fire Department to the Church was outstanding. I remember the clowns and everyone marching to the Church.

I could not leave out the music program at Mineral Springs. I have yet to work in a Church that works so hard in promoting a good music program for all ages. I will never forget how good the music program was.

When I talk about Mineral Springs, I always talk about the Pleasant Grove

Music Youth Camp. What an inspiration to see and hear and be a part of something so wonderful. The decisions for Christ that came out of that Music Camp will always be remembered with gratitude. And of course the music was the “best”.

I also remember the emphasis that you put on Children’s ministries. The backyard Bible Studies were so creative. You thought of that. How original.

I loved working with the Senior Citizens. I still have many of the pieces that I made at the Ellen Fitzgerald Center in Monroe. I will never forget running around in the Church van picking everyone up.

There are so many memories. Playing for the Church softball team was a thrill for me. But I guess my best memories are of YOU the people at Mineral Springs. You loved me so much! I will always thank God for ALL of you. You loved me in good times and bad times. But I always knew that I was loved. Don’t ever forget how to love one another. That is what keeps the Church going. Jesus said, “By this will all men know that you are my disciples, If you love one another.” (John 13:35)

I love you,

Benny Clodfelter

Dear Mineral Springs Church Family,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We salute you on this special day in the church’s life. Just as we depend on a clear windshield to see ahead when driving a car, it is also necessary to have a rear-view mirror to see where we have been. As we see where we have been, it gives us cause to worship and praise God. As we understand how our past shapes us, we are better positioned to face the future. We learn from the past in order to improve for the future. Mineral Springs is truly blessed with a strong heritage and history.

From all we hear Mineral Springs is doing great things now and the future

is bright and hopeful. Certainly the future is in God's hands and God is our Security and Guide. As you envision the future with trust in God, you can face the unknown with anticipation and excitement.

The "can-do" attitude that has always typified Mineral Springs sets this congregation apart from many who rely on "excuses" or settle for comfortable "ruts".

May God bless all of you in all He calls you to be and to do. Our prayers are with you and we are grateful for the eight years we shared with you.

God bless you,

Glenn L. Myers, Jr.

MEMORIES

In order to capture the real essence of the heart and soul of a church where could one go but to those who have invested their lives in it and consequently have very many fond memories of it.

In the following pages you will find some of the very memories listed. As you read these writings, hold them in your heart for it is in these very memories that, at least, a great part of the personal experiences are voiced. And it is in memories like these that the character and heritage of the church and its family is found.

It has been said that in order to know where you are going it helps to know where you've been. While the other parts of this book are aimed at past, present, and future--this section is looking at where we've been. Read and enjoy.

"Granny" Myrtle Blythe

--- Was born in 1903

--- Attended first service in New Chapel - 1908 - (taken by parents)

--- Did recitation at nine years old and still remembers it (1912) Children's Day Had black shoes with white strings and white dress with ruffles.

--- Fannie Helms was first teacher

--- Sunday - Very strict on doing anything. No coffee grinding, nor punishment on Sunday.

--- Joined church in 1915

--- Remembers where the old folk sat each Sunday

--- Camp Meeting - five services a day - had to attend

--- Remembers when Mineral Spring (the spring) was not cleaned around (this came later)

--- Remembers church box suppers - with crepe paper/sandwich, fruit and pound cake

--- Fathers saying - "Go with the best - or stay by yourself."

--- Mothers saying - "Your name is what you have - Keep your good name."

--- It was known that if you go with a Doster girl, you go with both of them.

--- Favorite hymns "Precious Memories" and "In The Garden"

--- Singing in choir

Mrs. Ethel Helms

--- Remembered our first Sunday School in 1893 which was held in a two room house on the present site of Moser Construction Co.

--- The Henry Plyler Singing School which would be an all day program for a whole week.

--- Remembers the boys would hold umbrellas over the girls when they would go over to Porters well (later known as 'The Public Well' for water during these schools. Plyler taught out of Preacher Hawkin's book.

--- July 4th picnics at the mineral spring.

--- Remembers when Mr. W. J. armfield worked to get the town name changed from Potter to Mineral Springs, a move that some folks didn't like as was shown in the fact that for several years after the name change letters would still be mailed to Potters, NC (and be delivered).

--- Remembers the John Richardson home being built in 1898 for one of the early doctors, Dr. Bailey.

Hubert Helms

--- Having the job of building the fire in the heater for church and ringing the bell, got \$.50 at month for this. This was when he was 10 years old. The bell was in the tower and when he rang it, it would pull him off the floor. The bell was given by M.M. Winchester and was off a railroad engine.

--- Favorite Hymn "Just As I Am"

Bernice Walkup

--- Remembered men sitting on one side at church and the women on the other.

--- Miss Jessie Edwards driving buggy to Sunday School.

--- Her Father, Murray Winchester owned a surry with fringe

Olin Murray

--- Said he chose Mineral Springs Church because it was the closest (had to walk to church then) Became a leader in many ways - Teaching Sunday School for many years.

--- Remembered he and the preacher Rev. Fitzgerald pulling a crosscut saw cutting logs to be used as lumber in the construction of our present sanctuary.

Thomas Haywood

--- Was Treasurer of Education Building Fund

--- Member of what was then the Official Board

--- Seeing children in Sunday School; Tommie, Fatsy, and Richard

--- Sunday School teachers: Olin Murray, L. J. Gann, Heath Davis, Baxter Howie

--- Member of Sharing Group after Lay Witness Mission

--- When pledges were falling behind on Education Building, he made a talk and got the fundraising completed.

Mrs. Homer Tyson

--- Remembered when, during a church supper in the community building, the gas range flared up and burned Mrs. Gertrude Mosers eyebrows off

--- Remembered how quick the ladies exited the sanctuary when the furnace backfired - This was when the church was filled with ladies during a district womens meeting.

Mrs. Viola Doster

--- Remembered hearing some folks "shouting" during church revivals.

--- The old sanctuary being heated by a big stove up front.

--- The curtains in the sanctuary dividing the Sunday School classes

--- Was WSCS president 22 years

--- Taught Sunday School 10 years

--- Attended World Conference of Methodist Women in New Jersey, in 1962.

--- Favorite Hymns, "Take Time To Be Holy" and "Those Golden Bells".

Bessie Rodgers

--- Mrs. Carter as teacher - the little Bible verse cards each Sunday

--- At first they walked to church

--- Then rode in an old Dodge Touring car with fold back top

Willie McCorkle and Murriel Romed

--- Children of Wallace Laney - owned 600 acres - lived originally in the Charlie Robinson home next to bridge on Crow Road. Lived on Potter Road later at the H. A. Carter place.

--- Their father, Bud Moser built a new home where L.P. Moser lives now, in 1923.

--- Went to school at Mineral Springs - E. H. Broome was Principle - Baxter Howie and Bertie Mae Broome were teachers - had pot bellied stove for heat - walked to school, mud seemed knee deep

--- Joined church at 10 years old

--- First transportation was surry - later bought Model-T Touring Car

--- Remembers Gordon, Winchester, Polk - Carter old stores and always saw Mr. Carter standing in the door of his store watching all that was going on. Could buy a good size bag of silver bells for \$.05

--- Mr. John Richardson as Sunday School Supt.

--- Mrs. Ida Howie was good source of community information - Remembers the 'short dog' train - played under streetlight at Tom Coans - people came from afar to get water at the mineral spring.

Lawrence and Helen Moser

--- Lawrence remembers Mrs. Carter as first teacher

--- He was Treasurer and remembers times were so bad that he would not get a single bill in collection - all silver and copper.

--- He was sent around to the homes to collect the budget - didn't like this so agreed to pay the remainder off, if it wasn't collected in each Sunday School class each Sunday - he didn't have to pay any off.

--- Remembers a neighbors mule lot real close to corner of first church.

--- Remembers the pot bellied wood heater used in first church.

--- Olin Murray hauling the logs out of the woods to sawmill for use in building our present church

--- Mrs. Nina (Laney) Geekie giving the logs. Also got logs off of preacher J. B. Craven's property.

--- Helen remembers the box suppers, dumpling suppers, and cake walks the ladies put on to pay for the community building.

- Remembers her mother, Mrs. Odessa Todd cooking dinner for our preacher, Mr. Fitzgerald while he was helping build our church.

Clara McDonald

I remember my first Sunday School class teachers: Mrs. Hugh Helms and Miss Effie Alexander. Our room was in the Narthax or bell tower room at the entrance of the church.

Then in our Junior years, our teacher was Mrs. H.A. Carter. Our room was at the back of the new addition to the right side of the sanctuary. We had sliding windows in the front of the room in order to use it for seating when the church was filled. Our next class in Sunday School was known as the Intermediate class in the middle room of the church addition. Our teachers were Mrs. Frank Krauss Jr. and Mrs. Katie Winchester.

In the early days of Sunday School, we had "Children's Day" in the early summer of each year. We had speeches, poems, songs, and drills. It was always a thrill to be the leader in the drills, or marches. The children would be divided into two groups. (The girls always wore white dresses and the boys white shirts and dark pants) Our drills were like military drills. Mama (Mrs. Baxter Howie), Mrs. F. T. Laney, and other teachers coached us. We would practice many weeks until we were perfect. Sometime each child would carry a small American flag.

We children knew how to behave in church. (we had no nursery) If we talked the Preacher would point and tell us to be quiet. Some children misbehaved anyway. One child walked around on the chancel rail. His mother said nothing. The Preacher just walked down and lifted him down, told him to go to his mother.

I was not here when the church building burned. George Coan came over to our office in Camp Sutton and told me that our church was burning! That was a very sad time.

I remember the part our Mother and Dad played in helping build and

furnish the present sanctuary. They went to Winston-Salem (a long journey then) to help pick out the patterns for the stained glass windows. Also, as all others remember physically helped build the church. I remember my Dad crawling on his knees and nailing down the pulpit floor that is still there at this date (Oct 1997).

Everyone bought folding wooden chairs for their family members until pews could be purchased. We still have four of these in our tent at the Pleasant Grove Camp Ground.

Our family moved to Monroe in 1933. I was married to Tom Smith there in 1938 and did not return to Mineral Springs until July of 1948.

We joined the church here again, as a family, Tom, Tom Jr., Mike, and myself. I knew that I had come home.

I would not want to belong to any other church and hope to see Mineral Springs United Methodist Church continue to grow in members, building, and last but not least in Spirit and continue to reach out in the community to help others.

Helen C. Moser

--- A teacher Mrs. Harve Carter coming to see her if she ever missed Sunday School to find out why and the Bible she received for attendance in 1929.

--- Mrs. John Gordon as her teacher

--- The movable partitions in the first church

--- Church held in John Gordon's store

--- Remembers an early organ (pump) in the white church.

Cleo Couick

Life at Mineral Springs United Methodist Church for over 54 years to be remembered as a kind, loving, and faithful neighbors in all kinds of sickness,

misfortunes, and happiness. Also in the works of the church in different officers and areas.

I do feel as if I have grown up in this church family with all of my children and neighbors.

Olive Howie

When Granddaddy Helms (Hugh Helms) died, Mr. and Mrs. Timmie sat up all night and made crepe paper flowers for his funeral. Hugh's wife, Fannie said this was appreciated so very much.

As a child I remember the long electric cords that hung down from the ceiling of the church.

Sometimes the pianist would have a small child who would sit on the stool as they played the piano.

Since there was no water at church, this was brought from home (in jars for baptizing etc.) Hand fans were used to keep cool. Used a woodstove in winter.

We usually had paperback songbooks. (couldn't afford hard backs)

The little white church that was accidentally burned in 1942 was very special to me. We had very few classrooms, so the beginners class had our class in the vestibule which was a small room at the entrance of the church. My grandmother, Mrs. Hugh Helms, taught this class. We were given small story cards as literature. There was a picture on the front of the card and a story about the picture on the back. We treasured these story cards.

Also, I remember the slatted petitions that could be let down to make two additional rooms. One for the junior class and the other for the intermediates. The adults had class in the church auditorium.

Dewey Robinson

My first Sunday School teacher was Mrs. Fanny Helms. We met in the vestibule of the little white church in the same spot as the existing church. Her husband, Mr. Hugh Helms, was the Sunday School Supt. Mr. and Mrs. Helms were the parents of 12 children and grandparents of Bill Howie and David Helms.

My parents were well blessed with five girls and three boys. It was quite a chore getting the family dressed for church. And what a sight it was to see ten people in a T Model Ford going to church. Everyone assembled in the sanctuary for a song and a prayer, dismissed for Sunday School, then came back to the sanctuary for preaching.

The pastor operated on a very small salary. I remember the budget at one time was \$600.00 per year. The people kept the pastor supplied with fruit and vegetables and chicken. Everybody fed the preacher chicken. I remember one time when the preacher was having lunch with us a rooster flew up on the window sill and crowed. The preacher said that sure is a proud rooster. My brother spoke up and said-he ought to be, for two of his brothers are in the ministry.

Margaret King

--- Was six years old when family moved to Mineral Springs - Joined church then, which was in the white frame church.

--- First Sunday School teacher was Mrs. Beatrice Carter - Memorizing Bible verses every week and recited them before class - Learned many Psalms by memory

--- The Church was the social center for the community - we enjoyed those times.

--- My Church and Sunday School has always been a blessing to me.

John Richardson

- Isabel McCorkle playing piano
- Helped dig graves (this was the custom then)
- Mrs. Carter was teacher
- Visiting the mineral spring
- Building the fire in the old pot bellied stove at church
- Preaching only every other Sunday
- Christmas programs - playing the Kazoo - little bag of nuts and fruit

Eleanor McCain

I have many fond memories of attending Mineral Springs Church. I began as a baby but I don't remember much about it except that I remember Mrs. Fannie Helms being my Sunday School teacher.

I learned from my parents that we are to give our offerings each Sunday. I remember when our Mother would get us ready for church and would give us our pennies, Tom and I would grind them in the dirt to shine them while our parents were getting ready for church.

When I was growing up the church was the main place to meet friends and Ruth Richardson and I would spend all day Sunday after church at her house or at mine. These friendships have remained all through the years.

I remember that our Mother taught Sunday School for many years. She would spend some time every day studying her lesson. Our Daddy was church treasurer for years and I remember back then the Stewards of the church would have to visit the church members on Sunday afternoon to collect enough money to pay the preacher. We would "pound" the preachers by giving them groceries etc.

I remember when Ronny joined the church. He was baptized as an infant. He grew up in Mineral Springs Church. He would always get to be good friends with our ministers as we had Duke students for lots of years after we went "station".

(Mrs. McCain is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. Tom Laney, a couple who were indeed one of the backbone families in our history.)

Donnie McGuirt

--- The Sunday School room in the white church opened up to make the sanctuary larger.

--- Bible School when we used to learn Bible verses and win a New Testament

--- The small nursery where the little paper bassinet's hang with the baby's name on it

--- Mrs. Helen Krauss was our Sunday School teacher and the parties we had that were special

--- Mr. John Richardson was Superintendent for many years

--- The day the church burned and the pews were carried out front to try to save them

--- We went to Mineral Springs High School for Sunday School and preaching until our new church was built

--- The big bell that rang before church started

Doris Carpenter

My Mom and Dad belonged to this church. When I was born in 1929, my Mom and Dad took me to church as soon as I was old enough. As soon as I was old enough to understand what it was to become a Christian, I was sprinkled and got saved. I have belonged to this church all my 68 years. Some of my fond memories are:

How we use to meet in the sanctuary before we went to our classes. Mr. John Richardson was our superintendent and we had devotion, was then dismissed to go to our classes. We had lots of other great times as I grew up in this church and became old enough, I joined the choir.

In 1947, I married Worth Carpenter. He was a Baptist and when he

realized this church meant so very much to me, he changed and became a everything he could. He was also superintendent at one time. He taught the Methodist. He loved our way of worship and started taking a part in class of students that had just graduated from high school and I taught the children's class for 14 years and I loved it.

Another great memory was when Worth and I had the MYF for five or six years. Marilyn was in that group along with many other great children. There's so many memories with all the great preachers we have had over all these years. To see all the new members, all the young couples, and all the children, its a dream come true for our church.

I'm real happy and proud to have been a member of this church for 68 years and looking forward to enjoying many more.

Douglas Doster

--- Remembers her mothers Sunday School class in one of the back classrooms

--- Being a flower girl in a wedding in the little white church

--- Rev. Fitzgerald and his gentle country manner

--- Attending church in the schoolhouse

--- Worth Carpenter as her teacher

David Helms

My earliest remembrance of Sunday School is the little class that met in the vestibule of the church. The children probably ranged in age from infant to first grade. There was a Cradle Roll which hung on the wall. Pink and blue ribbons held small paper bassinets with the name of each child on it. My grandmother, Mrs. Hugh Helms, taught this class.

We always assembled in the sanctuary at 10:00 o'clock and heard the announcements and sung a hymn before going to our Sunday School classes.

Mr. John Richardson was Sunday School Superintendent. He would roll up his Sunday School book and tap the little bell that sat on a table, when it was time to assemble back in the sanctuary.

Frances Helms

We had Bible School in the mornings from 9:00 to 12:00. We made posters about bible stories. As one of our crafts, we did spatter painting. We took a tooth brush and brushed paint through screen wire over a leaf, which was placed on a piece of paper. When the leaf was removed, we had a nice print of the leaf. Most children walked to Bible School, some as far as two miles.

Later when our church burned, we had church in the school house. My first remembrance of a lady minister was Mrs. Stidley. She held several revivals for us. She kept the attention of the young as well as the older ones. She brought her grand-daughter with her, who would tell Bible stories to the children. She used a flannel board, to demonstrate the story, which was very fascinating to all of us.

Marilyn Blythe Wooten

Forty years of memories can be quite over-whelming, especially when "coming full circle" means bringing you back to the origin of those memories! And Mineral Springs IS that origin for me as I recall coming back home in 1958 after a year or so of living on the coast of South Carolina while Dad worked there. Yes, Mineral Springs Church means more, much more, to me than 'just a church'...it's inside me, in the deepest places of my soul...since most of those early memories, after returning here to live, are of church and church activities! This church played an integral part in my life

as a child and teen-ager, and it was Rev. Earl Cook, minister here during my senior year of high school, who drove me to Pfeiffer College and introduced me to the "profession/vocation" of Christian Education...a visit which has

impacted my entire adult life! As I look back, I realize that God was preparing me from the time I was 8 years old to accept a call into Christian ministry...and it was the church family at Mineral Springs which nurtured this preparation! People like Cleo Couick (Sunday School), Margaret King and Doris Carpenter (UMYF), Modene and Bill Howie (music), and many others who influenced my life in ways that encouraged me to share my faith through my vocation as a Christian Educator and musician. I would like today, however, to celebrate two persons who, particularly through this church, have been especially significant in my life.

For me, the real joy of remembering those years now comes with where I am at present...and that is, back at Mineral Springs Church...back with my own family, my church family from years gone by, and now new members of this church family! Twenty five years of being a Christian Educator at other United Methodist Churches and I have come home. Home to a church which helps me to remember from whence I came, but more importantly, where I am going and where we can go as a church! My sincere prayer is that my own daughter, Haley, and the other children and youth in Mineral Springs Church today will someday look back on their experiences here in this church and recall them with as much love as I am able to recall mine!! Thank you, Mom and Dad, and thank you Mineral Springs Church, for giving me a foundation in Jesus Christ...a foundation that provides me with the comfort and peace that God will be with me no matter what happens and no matter where I am! I believe that this is the true test of the importance of a church and there is no doubt in my mind that Mineral Springs Church is building that kind of foundation in the lives it touches!

Modene Howie

- Standing and watching our church burn
- Having Sunday School in my Grandfathers old store
- Playing for weddings when 12 years old
- Managing and working in the hamburger stand that the Young Adult Fellowship ran for four years at the County Fair to help fund the community building and the first parsonage

Bill Howie

--- Mrs. Ethel Helms - my first Sunday School Teacher

--- Mr. John Richardson - Sunday School Superintendent and the little bell he would ring for assembly

--- Rev. Fitzgerald walking down the side aisle, after preaching, saying "You may have your Sunday School now" as he was heading for Pleasant Grove to preach there

--- Spending the night with Alton Fitzgerald in the old Waxhaw parsonage and my mother letting me go only after supper and saying come home before breakfast. This was because The Fitzgerald's didn't have enough to be feeding visitors, their salary from the churches didn't go very far (and to think a Methodist Bishop came from this family)

--- Remember that parsonage life as they lived it in Waxhaw with a milk cow, pigs, chickens and garden - No central heat and no air (Little different than today, Jim?)

--- While working on the community building (our old fellowship hall), seeing the then older men straightening the used nails for us to use

--- Remembering the rich heritage. I have in this church. From McWhorters to Pleasant Grove to Mineral Springs (our church's family tree) six generations of forbearers worshipped and served. The funerals of grandparents and parents, my own baptism, the place I met Christ, my wife's baptism, our wedding, our children's place of meeting Christ, maturing in the faith, serving with my family here through the years.

--- Hearing my mother with her alto voice and my dad with his tenor sing in the choir.

--- The rope to ring the bell in the steeple hanging there with the strong temptation to pull it and knowing what would happen to me if I did (I never did it)

--- Taking turns firing up the coal furnace in our new sanctuary

--- Regular habit of pushing Miss Bertha to and from church

--- The patience (and sometimes frustrations) of Helen Krauss our teacher of intermediate boys

--- The night, at choir practice, when my dog Chris, who had followed me as I rode the bike, came down the center aisle just howling for all he was worth when a certain soprano began hitting her high notes

PART IV

CONCLUSIONS

As we close this, the story of your church, it is our profound hope and prayer that you have come to know a little more about your church , it's family, it's heritage, and it's strengths.

For those of us whose generations who have gone on before, in this and our mother church, Pleasant Grove, and who provided for us today this wonderful church, it is indeed with grateful humility that we accept this gift. For those of you who have come to us, in you generation, we say welcome to this wonderful place where we together can mould a future here that is to be that "beacon on a hill" for all to see.

One that looks forward, as well as backward, remembering the wonderful heritage which has brought us to this time and yet still looking to the future and thrilling to the prospects of bringing new persons into a relationship with Christ and to an expanding ministry of outreach and nurture which will endure and prevail against all adversaries.

America is now in the most perilous period that she has faced. There now exists the greatest concentration of unsolved problems that she has ever been called upon to confront. The enormity of these problems have the power to overcome future generations if not worked on now. The Christian church and Christians as individuals provide the only real solutions to many of these issues. Will the church put its shoulder to the wheel and bring America back to the spiritual foundations upon which it was built? It will depend upon how each of us responds to this compelling need, and each of us answers the questions. If not here-where, If not now-when, If not me-who? How will we, here at Mineral Springs United Methodist Church, respond to these questions? As we move into a new and exciting future with all kinds of opportunities, what choices will we make and how will we minister in Christ's name to a hurting world.

As United Methodists, we have unexcelled opportunities to be a major part in bringing our great country back to its original character and mission. Why do we say this? A part of the answer lies in the challenges Lyle Schaller put in a speech before the United Methodist Mens Convention in 1985. We quote here some of what he said.

"The United Methodist Church has the Theology and the organization to

literally sweep this country for Jesus Christ. No other denomination has the power, the ability or the freedom to attract the masses as does the United Methodist Church. ...However, this giant has been lulled to sleep... If this church began to flaunt what it has and this giant begins to wake up...watch out...for it could literally change the world for Christ."

Schaller then went on to elaborate on this challenge. He said that the Wesleyan Theology is one of a few essential beliefs held so strongly to the unchangeable "Core of Doctrine" while permitting freedom of belief on the "Non Essentials".

This approach provides a wider potential appeal to far more persons. This doctrinal dual view added to United Methodism organization as a 'connectional' church,-with a Methodist Church in 96% of all the counties in America,-provides the platform from which to reach the grass roots of America.

In many wonderful ways we here at Mineral Springs are moving out into this grass roots element in ways not accomplished in most of our Methodist churches. The challenge to our emerging leadership is a very serious one. Those "Cores of Doctrine", these very fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith, are being assailed both from without the church and within. Extreme dedication to these essentials will be required if the church of Jesus Christ is to prevail in its purest form and meaning to coming generations.

In closing, we quote from our founder John Wesley. "I am not so concerned that the Methodist Church will ever cease to exist, as a body, however, I am afraid that they should exist only as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power". This must not come to pass. This great future of our church must be moulded by great men and women who can bring the heritage of the past as a power for the task of the present.

Appropriate words for closing can be found in Charles Wesley's hymn "And Are We Yet Alive". "Let us take up the cross till we the crown obtain, and gladly reckon all things loss so we may Jesus gain".

The challenge for our future church here is to "Put Christ above All and to go and make disciples."

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